

Wise Parents, Foolish Disciples & A Loving Saviour (Inc. Sunday School Prize Giving)

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Date: 15 June 2025

Preacher: Rev Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 00] Yes, Yes, Yes Yes Yes Thank you.

Thank you.

With the children of the congregation especially. We're going to begin the service by singing from Psalm 27. And we're going to sing verses 4 to 6.

Psalm 27 from verse 4. Psalm 27.

Psalm 27.

[2 : 21] One thing I hope, the Lord, desire, and will seek to obtain, the door is open.

chewing chewing chewing chewing chewing And the giantness, holy grace, lay with the peace and choir.

For here is the glorious God behind the heaven of the earth.

And the giantness, holy grace, lay with the peace and choir.

And the giantness, holy grace, lay with the peace and choir. And the giantness, holy grace, lay with the peace and choir.

[4 : 37] And the giantness, holy grace, lay with the peace and choir. For under this time of death, I'll suffer by the pain.

Of joy, Lord, let's my name. May I hear God with the peace and choir.

Let us join together in prayer. Amen. Amen. Amen. Eternal and ever-blessed God, as we commence our service this morning anew, we give thanks that we are invited to come with the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

To express our joyfulness in the presence of the God who is the source of every good and perfect gift, even the Father of Mary's, the God of all grace.

We bless and thank you for all that you are in yourself, that you have been pleased to reveal to us.

[6 : 11] Even though we may think that there are many things that we may not know about the God who is God over all. Indeed, you are a great God.

And we dare not imagine that we know all that there is to be known about you. But everything that is necessary for our awareness of the magnitude of the God who is God over all, our own significance in many respects.

Even though the world we live in seeks to impress itself upon our hearts, so that we may think that we are the centre of this universe, that we lie as the most important thing in the whole orbit of our experience.

No one is more important than ourselves. The great I, the ego that is nourished and nurtured within the societies that we live and move in.

And yet, all that does is seek to displace the very fact that you are the God, who is the I am, the one who is, the one who was and the one who will be God.

[7 : 52] As we worship, we pray that we would understand that we have access to you by way of the passion of Jesus Christ. We thank you for that way of access, that it is consecrated to us, even through the pages of your word.

We are reminded of how this has taken place. That through the blood of sacrifice, through the giving of his own soul as a ransom for many.

That he has opened a way, which is a new and a living way, into the presence of God. And we pray, Lord, that you would remind us of that every time we gather, in the name of Christ.

How privileged we are to know that this is something that is good for us to do. And that it is something that has been greatly blessed many times before, in the gatherings of your people the world over.

And even in this very place, that men and women, boys and girls have known the blessing of God upon the gatherings of God's people within this house.

[9 : 09] And that you have opened the mind's eyes to comprehend wonder beyond wonder. That they were never able to envisage until you opened their eyes so as to see the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

We pray that this may continue to be so. And that from time to time, even today, that you would touch the lives of your people in particular.

And add to that number. And that they would see that in Christ, everything that they desire, and everything that they could ever possibly envisage as being good for them.

We pray for your blessing to be upon the congregation here. Upon those who form a part of it. Those who are its members, its office bearers.

Those who adhere to the principles of the church that we espouse. We pray that you would encourage them in their gatherings and in their coming together into this place to worship their God.

[10 : 21] That you would continue to reveal yourself to them. That your spirit may be poured out upon them. And that you may pour out blessing upon them.

So that from weekday to weekday, from Sabbath day to Sabbath day, that they would know that God is amongst them. And by your spirit, you are able to bless your word to them.

And by your spirit, you are able to bless your word to them. Encouraging the faith of those who have come to faith. Building it up and nurturing it. And enabling them to go from strength to strength.

Until they appear inside. Adding to their number from those who are amongst them. Who may have a keen interest in the things of God.

We pray Lord that you would encourage them. And stimulate that interest. And quench any longings that they may have that may be resistant to the truth.

[11 : 21] And this world has its own way of making so many things that are in the world attractive to us. Even though they are in their own way.

Suppressing the instinct that is deep within us all. To be at peace with God. And there is only one way of access.

And only one way of peace. Even in the person of Jesus Christ. We bless you and thank you for him. And we pray that his name would be exalted.

Here in this place and the congregations of our island and beyond. We pray for all the congregations of our presbytery. We particularly remember the congregations that are vacant at this time.

And like this one that they may know in your time. One appointed to be set over them. To direct them in the things that are so precious.

[12 : 23] The things of the living God. We pray that you would remember the church as a whole. As it seeks to live out the witness and the testimony given to it by the Saviour Jesus Christ.

That we are sometimes thinking that the church is there to be a great organization that is revered and honored and exhausted.

And yet the reality is that throughout the ages that it has always been but a remnant of believers. And you are the one who has been instrumental in bringing them to being and sustaining their witness in this world.

And no matter how hostile it may be. No matter how hostile it may be. No matter how threatening the environment may be. In every age and in every generation. You have not left yourself without witness.

Yes, Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes
Yes
Yes
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Yes the neighbouring nations that are so determined on its extinction.

[14 : 02] We pray Lord that you would quench the flame of adversity and do your own will in keeping this world from the disaster that is so much threatening.

We remember to you the needs of the many those who are because of these trials brought to the very brink of extinction by reason of hunger and the threats that war brings of displacement and how unsettling it is for the elderly and the young in particular.

Lord we ask that you would mercifully undertake for us direct your people to the foodstool of God that the God to whom we cry would hear our petitions and bless in abundance that which is sought in your name.

We pray for all that is done in your name this day and every day. Remember those who are sorrowing amongst us remember those who have been afflicted by death heal the hurts of the wounded remember those who are unwell whether they are confined to their own home or killed for in hospital or elsewhere we pray that you would sanctify such providences to each of us that we may know to look to the Lord the one who is the great physician even the physician of souls.

Bless now our time together especially as we meet at this end of term with the young people of the congregation may we hold as precious the privilege that we have to bring instruction to bear on young minds that they may learn the truth of God and to learn it in such a way that it may dwell in their hearts as they grow into maturity and go out into the world.

[16 : 20] Something that is true of much of what we learned in our youth while we may in many instances have despised it and yet we found it following us into life and perhaps at times keeping us from entering into roads and pathways that were in themselves evil and we pray for your blessing upon all that is done even today hear our prayers and partners in Jesus name Amen We're going to read a passage of the New Testament Scriptures We're reading from the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Matthew and chapter 19 and we're going to read from verse 13 Matthew chapter 19 at verse 13 Then were there brought unto him little children that he should put his hands on them and pray and the disciples rebuked them but Jesus said suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven and he laid his hands on them and departed thence and behold one came and said unto him good master what good thing shall I do that then I may have eternal life and he said unto him why callest thou me good there is none good but one that is God but if thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments he saith unto him which

Jesus said thou shalt do no murder thou shalt not commit adultery thou shalt not steal thou shalt not bear false witness honour thy father and thy mother and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself the young man saith unto him all these things have I kept from my youth up what lack I yet Jesus said unto him if thou wilt be perfect go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come and follow me but when the young man heard that say he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions then said Jesus unto his disciples verily I say unto you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven and again I say unto you it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle and for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God and his disciples heard it they were exceedingly amazed saying who then can be saved but Jesus beheld them and said unto them with men this is impossible but with God all things are possible then answered Peter and said unto him behold we have forsaken all and followed thee what shall we have therefore and Jesus said unto them verily I say unto you that ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel and everyone that have forsaken houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my name's sake shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life but many that are first shall be last and the last shall be first

Amen and may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of this word and to this name be all the praise we can sing now to God's praise from Psalm 34 and we're singing verses 7 down to verse 11 Psalm 34 verse 7 the angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasses all those about that do him fear and them delivereth O test and see that God is good who trusts in him is blessed fear God his sins and on that and fear shall be with want oppressed the lions young may hungry be and they may lack their food but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good

O children hither do ye come and unto me give ear I shall you teach to understand how ye the Lord should fear and so on we'll sing these verses Psalm 34 from verse 7 the angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasses the angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasses all those about the earth that you can hear and them hear in heaven O test and see

God Yes, Yes Yes The right of young may not be beat, and they may not be pure, but they are truly in the heart, from all the heart gets me good.

[23 : 54] O children, heaven, will ye come, and unto me with thee.

I shall use thee to understand how ye the Lord should bear.

I shall return to the passage that we read from the New Testament Scriptures, the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 19, and read from verse 13.

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray, and the disciples rebuked them.

But Jesus said, Suffer, little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

[25 : 20] Suffer, little children, and forbid them not to come unto me. These are words, I'm sure, that some of you may have been taught in school.

I think it is a verse that we had to learn when we were in the day school, let alone in the Sunday school. It was one of the memory verses that we were given to the member.

But somebody said to me when I came here that they didn't want to hear a repeat service.

Well, I can say honestly, I've never preached on this text before. So it's the first time, it's not the first time I've looked at it, or quoted it, but it's not a verse that I've tried to preach on before.

But there are three things that we can take from the passage. I'm sure you're aware of these three things, but we'll use these three headings.

[26 : 30] First of all, we've got wise parents, we've got foolish disciples, and we've got a loving saviour.

Wise parents, foolish disciples, and a loving saviour. Wise parents, foolish disciples, and a loving saviour. Where do we find the wisdom of this passage?

Well, I think, I would hope anyway, that the wisdom is seen in bringing the children to Jesus. I don't think that there is any mother or father or grandfather or grandmother that could do better than to bring their children to Jesus.

And while we understand that this is possible in a different way, in the sense in which we see it happen literally in the experience of the Lord.

When he was on the earth, he met people physically and spoke to them orally, and they heard his voice. And he dealt with them in a way that he doesn't deal with us because he's no longer present in the world, as you understand.

[28 : 01] But he is present by his spirit, and he is present through his word, and through the testimony of his people.

And that's what we need to remember, that while it is not possible for us to imagine us being able to do what the parents that are spoken of here did in the day that Jesus was on earth, it is still possible for us to bring our young people to the Lord.

And to do so in a very positive way. We can introduce our children to the Lord through his word, everything that it teaches us above them.

Everything that it teaches us about what he said. We could do worse than introduce our children to the experience of meeting with God's people.

And introducing them to them. Surely an introduction to God's people with that appreciation of who they are.

[29 : 24] And the awareness they have of being one of the Lord's people is something that's advantageous. And nothing could be better for any of our people than to remind ourselves of how privileged we are to have God's house and God's people as God's people as God's church meet on a Lord's day and at other times.

And to introduce our children to that experience. It's a simple truth. But it's one that's one that's very much overlooked and very much despised, I think.

We don't appreciate what advantage belongs to it. What are the advantages of it? As you know, I'm not going to go into this in great detail, but you know that I've retired.

And one thing that I've been met with, I get tired of being asked the question, what are you doing in your retirement? As if all I had to do was, once I retired as a minister, put on my carpet slippers and start smoking a pipe and sit beside the fire.

And that was all. And it was as if people imagined, well, how are you going to fill your time? And I don't suppose that you can fill your time in the same way that it was filled while you were actively in ministry.

[31 : 13] And I think that's true for all jobs, not just ministry. But there were several things that I wanted to do.

And some of them, one of them, and the most important one is, I think, what leaves me here today. I enjoy, I take pleasure in preaching the gospel.

I enjoy going to different congregations, not just because they're different, but it's a privilege to be able to share the gospel with others.

And that was important for me, that I would be able to do that as long as God gives me the health and strength to do so. That's what I want to do. But there are, I suppose, other interests that were personal to myself.

I enjoy gardening. And sometimes devoted to that, getting things in order for what I'm living.

[32 : 18] And also something very personal to myself. My mother was a Christian. And she, for many, many years, kept an informal diary.

And she noted down all kinds of trivia to do with the family and to do with her own personal situation at the time. But because she was a Christian, many of her jobtings, and they were jobtings, had spiritual content.

And she would write down verses that were relevant to her situation at the time. She would note down sermons, headings, and question meetings, and what the question was, and who spoke, and so on.

And these jobtings went over many years. And I came in possession of them.

And I would see certain things in there that always stimulated my interest. And I thought, well, maybe one day I'll take time to sift through this and take out the most relevant things.

[33 : 35] Now, I mentioned my mother because of this text and that other interest that I had. As a mother, a Christian mother, she always set before the family the importance of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord.

That doesn't mean to say that I listened. That doesn't mean to say that I heard what she had to say. And for many years I chose not to take that advice on board.

But this was her heart and her love for the Lord. And it came out in this way. In bringing God's word and imposing some kind of order to lives that otherwise would have been chaotic.

And directing her attention to the person of Jesus Christ. And that influence was important.

Even though at the time I didn't see the import of it. So I'm saying that not to elevate in any way my mother above any other mother.

[34 : 58] And of course she has that place as my mother and your mother has for you or your parents have in your life. But that is something that Jesus encourages us to do.

And as Christian parents and as parents who have an interest in Christianity and the church. Don't ever think that what you're doing is not worthwhile.

It's not relevant. Because it is something that is influential. Greatly influential in the life of the children of our community.

The second part to this is that amongst the Joftings I came across this. And it's to do with the garden. And I came across it recently.

And it's called the garden of your daily living. And it works like this. Plant three rows of peas.

[36 : 09] Peace of mind. Peace of heart. Peace of soul. Plant four rows of squash. Squash gossip. Squash indifference.

Squash grumbling. Squash selfishness. Plant four rows of lettuce. Let us be faithful. Let us be kind.

Let us be patient. Let us really love one another. No garden is without turnips. Turnip for meetings. Turnip for service.

Turnip to help one another. And to conclude our garden. We must have time. Time for each other. Time for family.

Time for friends. Water freely with patience. And cultivate with love. And cultivate with love. There is much fruit in your garden. Because you reap what you sow.

[37 : 08] Just one of these things that I was able to believe. And as a keen gardener. And as a keen gardener.

It speaks to me. But it reminds us of what we can do. Simple things that are so important. And when we look at this verse.

We see parents bring children to the Lord. And you ask the question. Why? Some of the commentators suggest that the children were infants.

That they were small. Because in the Jewish culture. The family was so important. And the children began to be instructed in the teachings of the Bible.

Very early on. So it was a surprise. If you felt that. That they were older children. That were being brought.

[38 : 12] Because. They were taught very early on. Of their own responsibility. And their own duties. As children. But I don't think that.

However old the child is. That it is ever. Outside the scope. Of our duty. To pray for them.

And to remember them. They certainly. Want Jesus. To pray for them. And they certainly want Jesus. To pray with them.

Whatever they thought. You know. Maybe it was just superstition. Maybe. They thought that Jesus. Touching them. Would in some way. Be an advantage to them.

But maybe it was just simply. That they wanted. Jesus. To bless. The child. And that's what. Surely lies at the heart. Of what we have here.

[39 : 12] They want Jesus. To bring. Spiritual. Advantage. Into the life. Of this. Of this. Child.

Man. That. Many think. That. That. While it may have been babies. That's. Fair enough.

For you to think like that. But we are never too old. To be prayed for. And we are to remember. As somebody has put it. The child. Is the father.

Of the man. The kind of person. A man is. Or a woman is. Depends. Very much. On what kind. Of boy. Or girl. They wear. The quality.

Of the next generation. Of adults. Is determined. By what we do. With this generation. Of children. If they have positive.

[40 : 06] Influence. On their lives. It will not. Be to their disadvantage. The second thing. We have. Is this. Foolish disciples.

Well. Foolish. In what sense. The disciples. May. Well. Have thought. That they were doing. Jesus. A favor. That they were doing.

The right thing. Because. Clearly. The Lord. Was inundated. With requests. For something. To be done. Whether it was.

Healing. Or. Wisdom. Or whatever. And he was. Surrounded. By. Crowds. Of people. Who were. Wanting. Some time.

With him. And the disciples. May have thought. Well. The children. Can be. Put to one side. Because. He has more important. Things to do. Or maybe.

[41 : 00] He has. Spent himself. In. Doing the things. That he was doing. And. Yet. If you. Remind yourself.

Of this. As they should have. Reminded themselves. Of this. Jesus. Was in the world. To do one. Preeminent thing. He came. Into the world.

To seek. And to save the lost. He came into the world. To seek. And to save the lost. And. Is that not the thing. We are all.

Lost souls. Until. Salvation. Becomes. Our experience. From the moment. We draw breath. Our soul. Is in need. Of.

Salvation. And. Jesus. Is the only. Savior. And we are never. Too young. To learn. That truth.

[41 : 56] And we are never. Too young. To be within. The compass. Of the sphere. Of the influence. Of the Lord. We. It is so wrong. For us. To think. That we should.

Allow. Our children. To grow. Up. Until they are able. To make decisions. For themselves. And these decisions. Are the decisions.

That will. Decide. Where they. Spend their eternity. There is never. Too early. An opportunity. To impress.

The thought. Of eternity. Upon a child. Because sometimes. They have a better. Understanding of it. Or a. A clearer. Understanding. Of what's important. Than.

Maturer. People. An old preacher. I can't remember. Who it was. But I noted. What he said. Let us. He said. Begin.

[42 : 52] From the. Very earliest. Years. To deal. With his children. As having souls. To be lost. Or saved. And let us. Strive.

To bring them. To Christ. Let us. Make them. Acquainted. With the Bible. As soon as. They can. Understand. Anything. Let us. Pray with them. Let us.

Pray for them. Let us. Teach them. To pray. For themselves. Now that. Seems. To be. An obvious. Thing. To be.

And yet. The disciples. Somehow. Had lost. Sight. Of that. They weren't. Able. To appreciate. The. The fact.

That. We cannot. Exclude. Our young. People. From the blessings. That Jesus. Has to. Confere. Upon. The whole.

[43 : 45] Of mankind. Man. Or woman. Old. Or young. When it is not. Exclusively theirs. They should not. At any cost. Be excluded.

At any time. And we should always. Have. This. Mentality. To. Take time. I remember. As a young Christian.

Being taught. This truth. Amongst. In the company. Of older Christians. Sometimes. The temptation. Was. For the conversation. To gravitate.

Towards. The more. Wichty. Theological. Questions. That were. A stimulus. To the brain. And to the mind. And perhaps.

Questions. That vexed them. And that. Sometimes. Excluded. The younger Christian. From the conversation. Because it was. Beyond us. Because it was. Something.

- [44 : 40] That we. Couldn't. Grasp. But there were. Older Christians. There. Who always. Were mindful. Of the presence.
- Of young. People. And. The. The advice. That they would give. Was. To keep. The. The meal.
- To keep. What was. Being digested. At a digested. Chested. At a digestible. Level. That we could. That we could. Understand. And grasp.
- Something. For ourselves. And not to feel. Excluded. I think. The church. Has got this wrong. And. It is something. That has clearly.
- Been a danger. That. We see. Now. Within the church. And for a long time. Within the church. Young people. Simply. Being with. Their own age group.
- [45 : 37] To the exclusion. Of. The older. Christian. And. Older Christians. Being content. That that is the way. Things. Ought to be. Rather than.
- The church. Being. In their. Times. Of. Sharing. And. Contemplating. God's word. At an informal.
- Level. That it should be. For all ages. And it should. Accommodate. The levels. Of intellect. And the levels. Of understanding. And spiritual. Progress.
- Of all. And when we fail. To do that. We fail. To. To integrate. Into the fellowship. Those who. Who may feel.
- Disenfranchised. Who may feel. Unable. To understand. For themselves. What is. Of worth. The Lord. This unloving.
- [46 : 33] Lord. He is a loving. Savior. He perhaps. Understood. The disciples. Desire. And yet. He rebukes them. He may understand.
- What lies behind. What they say. He rebuked. The disciples. In the same way.
- That. That. The. The. The example of their willingness to express themselves truthfully and to imbibe the truth without question, with belief and understanding and without the thought that this is perhaps something that's not right.
- If Jesus said it was right they were willing to believe and that's the way he perceived the church should be with regard to the truth of God. We cannot say that Jesus did not know why he was in the world. He had, as we said, come to seek and to save the lost.
- That is what's the main reason for his coming. You can go right back to the account that we have when Jesus was a 12 year old accompanying Mary and Joseph on an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
- [48 : 25] And they attended on the day of atonement the rituals and sacrifices that belonged to that day.
- And they made their way home and he stayed behind and he spoke with the elders and spoke with the teachers. They took some time before they realised it and the important thing to remember is this, that when they came to him perhaps very annoyed that he had put them through such turmoil, looking for him and not knowing where he was.
- His answer to them was, wist he not that I should be about my father's business? So that picture of Jesus is a picture of someone who knew the import of the work that he had engaged in.
- That he was in the world, not just to bide his time until his race was run, he was there for the express purpose of being a redeemer to the lost, being a saviour to sinners.
- And yet, when it comes to bringing children to him, he is seeing them as being very much a part of what he has to do.

[49 : 48] He looks about them and very often he sees those who are neglected and rejected by many.

Jesus understood better than most the value of time. And that's something we can easily lose sight of.

We count time in a way that's detrimental to our understanding of its value. Because we think a child is but a child destined to achieve adulthood and maturity and to live to a ripe old age.

Where did such reckoning find its impetus? We have no right to understand or believe that any one of our children can live into maturity.

We have no right to believe that many of the trials and tragedies of this world, which many have to encounter unprepared, would be better met if the person going through these things at faith had an understanding of God and his way of doing things and the wisdom that is his and alone his.

[51 : 15] Charles Price, in his comments on Matthew's Gospel, he was just quoting somebody else, I believe.

And I was thinking of, if I was going to take these words of quotation, that they can be easily misunderstood or misrepresented.

But what he said was this, and I remember the late Mordomacauley saying something very similar to this. He said, 80% of all Christians who are converted are all converted before they are 20 years of age.

80% of all Christians are converted before they are 20 years of age. Now, you can take that away.

You can say, well, that places an onus and an urgency on us to make sure that our children are brought to the Lord as much as we are able to bring them to the Lord as soon as possible.

[52 : 32] Because the older you get, the harder it becomes, and the more unlikely it becomes that you will achieve faith. Now, you might interpret that as thinking, well, I am now well past 20.

I am now well past the age of being converted. Well, conversion is God's doing. He is the one who convicts. I suppose you can do what you like with statistics, and statistics are very easily manipulated.

But if there is any truth in that, it does place an onus on us to ensure that as soon as possible, we equip our children to appreciate the necessity of faith and the wonder of our Saviour.

But also to remind ourselves that this Saviour is the Saviour of children, of adults, of old people.

Never too late to believe because what you do, when you believe, as a 5-year-old, as a 10-year-old, as a 20-year-old, it's exactly the same thing that you must do when you're 40, 50, 60, 80.

[53 : 59] Exactly the same. You must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to save your soul. Trust that soul to his keeping.

And as long as we have breath in our body, that's what we're encouraged to do. Well, may God encourage you to remember your privilege as a congregation to bring the children of the congregation to God.

As parents, bring your children to encounter the Word of God, the people of God, and the passion of Jesus Christ in his Word.

To pray for your children, to pray for the children as you promised to do, those children who are baptized in the congregation. Vows are not just taken by the parents who take their children for baptism, but also a commitment on the part of the congregation to bear these children to God in prayer, and to pray for the children of God in prayer.

That your word is a reminder to us of your own patience with the thinking that is in the world, and the laxity that may infect us, even in making us believe that time is something that we have to spend at will.

[56 : 02] We would ask, O Lord, that you would continue to watch over the congregation here. Remember the teaching that is delivered in the Sunday school. Teachers who prepare these lessons and who prayerfully watch over the souls of those who are entrusted to their care.

Remember every home and family in the community. Add to their number, we pray, and continue to bless the congregation as a whole, forgiving our sins.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. I'm going to sing from Psalm 23.

I'm hoping the children are going to come in. I was given a time. And I'm going to just read this verse with you.

I will sing it, and hopefully the children will arrive on cue. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, he makes me down to lie. In pasture's green he leadeth me the quiet waters by.

[57 : 07] My soul he doth restore again, and me to walk doth make. Within the paths of righteousness, even for his own name's sake. Ye though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear none hill.

For thou art with me, and thy rod and staff me comfort still. My table thou hast furnished. In presence of my foes, my head thou dost with oil anoint, and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me. And in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be. These verses, the Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie. And thy church in me leadeth me.

[58 : 15] The quiet water fly. My soul he doth restore again, and me to walk of me.

Within the paths of righteousness, In full of his own name's sake.

Ye though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I fear none hill.

For thou art with me, and thy rod, And shall I be done for sale.

My table thou hast furnished. In presence of my foes, my head thou hast with oil anoint, And my cup overflows.

[60 : 04] Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely fall. For thou art with me, and thy life shall surely follow me. And my cup overflows. For thou art with me, and thy life shall surely fall. And my cup overflows. Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me.

God bless and mercy all my life shall surely follow me. God bless and mercy all my life shall surely follow me.

And in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

God bless and mercy all my life shall be. I am now going to hand over to Mr. McAver to take you over.

Well, it's nice to see you all here. I'm threatening to use my megaphone, I thought you were fond of it. But Ken, measurefully, has screwed up the lapel mic.

[61 : 20] So hopefully you can all hear me. And here we are again. The end of another Sunday school term. And it almost feels like we're back in the old routine.

We've got our esteemed minister, Kai, back with us. But it's not quite the same. We're very grateful of course to have him. And I'm very impressed that he finished on time.

I noticed this week, Cathy Van, on whose scouting program he was, that it's meant to just stop him. But I wasn't quite going to be that old. Anyways, lovely to have him back.

And it's even nicer to have Margaret, did I say? It was Margaret really we were after. But it was a package deal we got. There was a two for one offer. And we're so glad to have them both with us today.

So in a wee while Margaret will be invited up to come. And she'll present the prizes to the kids. Their books and their certificates. But firstly, it's imperative on myself, on behalf of the Sunday School, to give a few thank yous.

[62 : 27] So first of all, and in no particular order, I'd like to thank Reverend Thomas Davis, who's our interim moderator. And indeed to all the interim preachers whom we've had since Kai's retirement.

And in particular, I'm sure you'd all agree, it's been edifying to hear them. And particularly to have what Malcolm Steadfast refers to as the all-age talks delivered to us.

And although they're primarily for the youngsters amongst us, I'm sure we'd all agree we've all benefited from hearing all these different speakers and engage with us.

And who, how they've brought advice to the fore in the illustrations and the talks delivered. So thanks to all of those who are not here, but I met it and thanks.

Thank you also to the Church Session for their spiritual oversight in terms of the Sabbath School particularly. Thanks to the Deacons Court for practical support. And this may come as a bit of a shock, but we had a mishap yesterday with our receivocetum coming after them for more money and tap then up for that.

[63 : 46] Thank you to the teachers with whom we wouldn't be able to have Sabbath School. And as was alluded to earlier today, those who in the past as well, who are maybe unsung, who've sown seeds, that maybe now are only producing fruit.

We owe them a debt to those of us who've been through Sabbath School. Thank you to those teachers or persons whom we've called upon to fill in on occasion.

Sometimes we've been disposed and it's nice to be able to call on some who will willingly step in and teach and help. And if there's any here who feel that they can contribute, we'd be delighted to hear from them in any garries as well.

Thank you to our safeguarding officers, particularly to Anne, who tells us what we should do and when we should do it. But particularly and especially we need to thank the parents and grandparents and all who have the welfare of the Sunday School at their heart and also have the welfare of our children at heart because they are in many respects the children of the congregation.

And that's unlauded, least by any means. We need to thank, we need to be thankful for the children and we need to thank the children indeed. Because they come, they have a total of 19 who can and often do attend.

[65 : 21] And they've applied themselves with rigor and let's say enthusiasm most of the time to their lessons. And that's gratifying for us and it's lovely to see them come and to develop within the church community.

In terms of how we try and endeavour to teach the kids, we're still using the GoTeach resource, which we find useful. In the Old Testament over the course of this time, I was looking back, we've heard of some of the heroes of the Old Testament and some characters also there.

We've learnt about Joshua leading the people to the Promised Land and others like Gideon, Andrew and Samuel and indeed King Saul. And in the New Testament, we've focused on the birth of Jesus, some of the people Jesus met, the I am saints of Jesus and we've finished our term talking and relaying and reminding ourselves of the great mission of Jesus.

How it culminated in his death and subsequent resurrection and how that holds out to us the offer of a sure and certain hope, not just for this life, but the life to come and we could have passed in him.

And our prayer as we finish the term is that the children and in fact all who hear this would come to know this great Saviour for their sins. A few of the activities we've conducted throughout the year, a couple of extra obviously with the retirement of a minister, the Sunday School participated in the Do in the community hall and they applied themselves really well to that and to learning Psalm 23, in particular in Gaelic, which was a joy to do and the fact that they led and opened the event with that singing was really quite touching and it's better to them for applying themselves to that.

[67 : 18] This year again we've had the JARS collection initiative and again this year it's been in support of the church youth camps, again as the camp in Cuncay we're supporting.

And we're hopeful, we've asked Hannah and Mackenzie to come and address us after the camp session, but perhaps at the beginning of our next academic year, and that hopefully will prove to be interesting and stimulating and might make us think how camps are holiday activity that might apply to our children.

Last year we tried to get Murdoch Campbell but he did a runner before she could come to camp, and she obviously heard us, heard our reputation. And to date, the count is a magnificent, from the JARS, 500 pounds, which is a really commendable sum.

I always make myself a station and charge, I then show a kitchen table and we have to start counting money, I see that all. But 500 pounds of coins and even better, yesterday I heard that there's a couple of outstanding JARS, DJ Morrison, Angie McDonald, so with a bit of luck these wealthy guys will drop it up for grand.

That's our hope. Not a dog is probably his head, but it's got to be good. So that would be very good too. Yesterday, I refer to yesterday, yesterday was the culmination of the year, and for me and I hope for all who attended the outing was an outstanding success, the day was excellent, the weather was fantastic.

[68 : 51] Thanks principally to God for giving us that opportunity to come together and to enjoy nature and enjoy each other's company and to participate in all that goes into making the outing so memorable.

I hope everyone who was there enjoyed it. Indeed, thanks has to be conveyed to those that actually couldn't attend but contributed in so many ways. There was food and baking and in terms of setting up and tidying up and cleaning, thanks to all who donated monies and supported in so many other ways.

And thanks as well for the prayerful support that I know goes into not just ensuring that we have God's accompaniment when we had the outing but throughout the year as well.

It was nice to be together. And I have to be abreast as well to the spirit that was so clear in evidence. It was throughout the day so friendly and I think it was typified by the fact that we have so graciously allowed the rest of the world to win up the side of the war.

And that's what occurred with me. But in all seriousness, it was a very nice day. It's also a little poignant when we come to the end of an academic year because it means that those who have come through the Sunday School and have come through years, they leave us.

[70 : 19] And it's with a tinge of sorrow that we say ta-ta to the three girls who have been so much part and parcel of their Sunday School, they were threatening to start blubbing.

Well I'm just going to finish with prayer and grace. I think there is leftovers from yesterday's picnic in the hall there.

So I'm sure you'll be able to have tea and juice there. So we'll finish with a word of thanks for the food and the benediction.

[76 : 56] And you make your way to the hall. And you're all welcome to stay for that. Eternal God, as we mark this time of year with a presentation of prizes to the young people, we give thanks that that is possible.

And I would pray that they would have the greatest prize of all. Just like the one who was at the heart of the best things in the life of this world.

who taught others to value what was the pearl of great price. And to do all in their power to ensure that that would be their possession.

May you as Lord direct their hearts and minds to making the Lord their portion. And to make you the very most precious thing that they could achieve for themselves.

And trust in you for time and for eternity. We give thanks for the occasion and we pray your blessing upon it. And we ask now that you would bless the provision that is made for us.

[78 : 14] And you would give thanksgiving and come and join in fellowship together around these things. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest in a time with you all now and always.

Amen. Amen.