

## DEVOTIONAL AID FOR 21 SEPTEMBER 2020 – 27 SEPTEMBER 2020



**UPPER  
HUNTER**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear church family,

Christians are those who believe in Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. They repent of their old sinful ways and trust wholly on Christ for forgiveness of their sins and righteousness God requires. These are important and true statements. But it is possible that, in modern western world especially to neglect another aspect of being a Christian, and that is Christians not only believe, but belong.

When we repent and believe in Christ, we are saying, among other things, that we no longer will live apart from Christ and His people. We are repenting of our old ways of self-centred and individualistic lives. And we are recognising God's good design for humanity to live in community, in commune with the Blessed Trinity and with one another.

In our individualistic society, we may be forgetting the importance of the church. Questions like, "Is church really that important?", "Isn't it a Roman Catholic idea and wrong?" may arise in our heads. If not in our head, in our practice, we might be neglecting church attendance, and even when we do attend it, treat it as a chore and something less than precious. And most troubling of all, in our heart of hearts, we may dislike church, even have a certain arrogance over and contempt against church.

But Christ loves the church. Yes, the one we make up, the one we attend (sometimes), the one we find frustrating. The church was God's idea, and Christ loves the church like no human husband could love his most beautiful and loveable bride. And if we're loved by this Christ and believe in Him, we should also know that we belong to Him together with other Christians. We are Christ's bride. We must love the church and attentive to the church.

The Apostles' Creed, in its brief but theologically paramount statements, includes a line about believing in "the holy catholic church." We, Upper Hunter Presbyterian Church believe in the holy catholic church.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

<https://www.upperhunterpc.com>

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## THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM<sup>1</sup>

### Lord's Day 21

#### Q54) What do you believe concerning “the holy catholic church”?

A) I believe that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for Himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith. And of this community I am and always will be a living member.

#### Q55) What do you understand by “the communion of saints”?

A) First, that believers one and all, as members of this community, share in Christ and in all His treasures and gifts. Second, that each member should consider it a duty to use these gifts readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members.

#### Q56) What do you believe concerning “the forgiveness of sins”?

A) I believe that God, because of Christ's atonement, will never hold against me any of my sins nor my sinful nature which I need to struggle against all my life. Rather, in His grace God grants me the righteousness of Christ to free me forever from judgment.

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### JOHN 10:27

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

*The bible depicts God's people as sheep. Not the most flattering picture, but it is an accurate one. We are helpless by ourselves like sheep, not particularly smart, nor strong enough to defend ourselves from attackers. But, what difference it makes when the Shepherd is with the sheep. Our Lord Jesus knows us as we hear His voice and follow Him. And the Shepherd has a flock of sheep. We, as Christians belong to the church of Christ. And this church is holy by the blood of the Shepherd and catholic, that is, universal regardless of individuals' cultural, ethnic, geographical backgrounds and locations across the past, present, and future. In the truest sense, the repeated motto in COVID-19 pandemic, “we're all in this together” applies to Christians as we all belong to the one holy catholic church.*

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### 1 COR 6:17

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

*In this verse, Paul isn't saying some kind of merging of two spirits happen, one of a believer's spirit with Jesus's spirit. The biblical picture of humanity (and God) shows us that as God's people, we both retain our individuality as well as unity with others. Depending on the cultural background, some tend to forget the individual and private side of Christian life, and others tend to forget the corporate nature of Christian life. We in the Australian culture today, we might be seeing some occasional swing back from individualism to communalism. Whatever your tendency, it is important to remember that Christians belong to church and are meant to share life with other Christians.*

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### JOHN 3:17-18

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

*God being holy and just, He judges the sinful world and sinners like myself. The good news is that Jesus has dealt with the judgment of God so anyone who trusts Him can be freed from God's judgment. It is a message that frees us from fear and compels us to love and obedience to God. Do you know this good news?*

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<sup>1</sup> The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.