

Worship

(Prepared by Sita Weinrich and additions made by Linda Bednar)2011/2012
According to the current VCC (Constitution and) By-laws (2011):

Contents:

1. Definition of the duties of the Worship Committee according to the Statutes
2. Composition of the Worship Committee
3. General duties of the Worship Committee
4. Detailed duties of the Worship Committee

1. Background information:

Worship: List of jobs according to the Statutes:

This committee shall be responsible for working out a schedule and securing personnel for ushering at all services of worship. (Greeters, flower givers, communion servers)

It shall study parts of the service of worship together with the pastor, recommending changes where necessary or desirable.

It shall keep records of attendance at worship services.

It shall make all necessary arrangements for Holy Communion.

It shall make provisions for supplying the pulpit during the pastor's absence and when the pulpit is vacant.

It shall be responsible for the printing and delivering of the bulletin.

2. The Worship Committee consists of

Chairperson and Deputy

Coordinator for communion elements

Volunteer Coordinator

Bulletin Provider and Printing persons

3. General duties of Worship Committee

Obtaining volunteers: greeters (2 each Sunday), 2 ushers, flower givers, readers (see instructions under Volunteer Coordinator)

Pastor provides information to Bulletin Provider

Preparing bulletins (see instructions under Bulletin Provider)

Setting up sanctuary for worship (see step-by-step instructions below)

Lighting candles

Taking the Offering

On Communion Sundays: (see instructions below)

Prepare elements (see separate instructions below)

Set table

Get 4 servers (of different nationality, if possible)
2 ushers get 20 people to front in an orderly fashion

Step-by-step guide:

Preparations before the service

1. Clear the pews: put all “green” German hymnals to the outer end of each pew. Clear all other sheets, collect them on the windowsill.
2. Put 3-4 “red” hymnals in each pew.
3. Put register sheet, offering envelope, light green prayer request slip, and pencil on each inner pew.
4. Guestbook is kept in the hymnal cabinet. Place it on the entrance welcome table with bulletins.
5. Have bulletins at both entrances. If there is choir, take 10 bulletins up, otherwise only one for the organist. Place it on the organ if she/he is not there. Supply Pastor with bulletin, a hymnal and a bible.
6. Exchange new copied coloring pages in the children’s activity bags
7. Banner and candle lighter: are kept in the Left Half of the cupboard in the Right Hallway. Check the color of the Banner according to the date of the season given on the list hanging in the cabinet. Hang the banner over the pulpit. Take the candle lighter to the back of the church. Have a lighter or matches with you.

Offering baskets: are kept in the bottom drawer of the cupboard (or above on the ledge) in the sacristy. Put them in the very back pew with the candle lighter.

Metal bowls for “change for change-last Sun. of the month are in the bottom drawer in the sacristy. They are placed in the front row next to the pillows for the children’s message. These pillows are through the door behind the alter and to the left, back in the corner.

Preparations for during the service:

8. Candle lighting: Ask a child to light the candle during the Prelude. Walk in with the child and assist her/him. If you do not find a child, light the candles yourself with dignity.
9. 2 ushers to seat latecomers and to collect the offering. (It is nice if they are different persons and nationalities). Walk up to the altar on the last stanza of the Hymn of the Day/or after the sermon. While passing the basket, count the worshipers. (Add the persons in the choir and the children, who went to Sunday School, the Pastor and yourself). Write the number in the record book on the windowsill in the vestry. For Communion Services: Ushers get 20 people to front in an orderly fashion
10. Before the offering is taken to the front, take out the Prayer Request slips, put together those with the same type of request, i.e. health, and hand all of them to pastor when you take the offering forward. Pastor takes the offering baskets and blesses the offering. Then walk back to your seats using the side isles.

11. For Communion:

Linda or substitute prepares the elements for communion before the service. (See her instructions separately below)

Souwanit will arrange for 4 servers altogether. (She tries to combine the nations and continents as balanced as possible).

All four communion servers walk toward the altar before the communion.

- One brings the little whole bread to the altar. Puts it down on the “bread side” (left if you stand facing the altar), uncovers the bread tray, folds the cloth.

- One brings the wine chalice to the altar. Puts it on the “wine side” (right if you stand facing the altar), uncovers the chalice and wine tray, folds the cloth.

- The other 2 follow to the altar, then walk to the left side of the altar.

During the words of institution, Pastor breaks the little bread in half. Thereafter Souwanit will break the halves into pieces and adds them to the bread tray.

Serving:

Pastor serves the bread and will say: “This is the body of Christ broken for you”

The servers of the grape juice/wine will say: “This is the blood of Christ shed for you”, or “This is the life of Christ given for you” **(and the name of the communion taker, if known)”**

1. The grape juice tray server follows, walking about 3 people interval behind the pastor.

2. The wine tray server walks directly behind the grape juice server.

3. The one who served the chalice, takes the napkin, which is folded on the altar, and wipes the cup each time someone drinks from it.

4. takes the basket to collect the empty glasses.

After one round the group stands behind the table as the minister dismisses the people with a blessing, and then it is repeated as often as needed. The person with the grape juice may need to transfer glasses of grape juice from the 3rd tray unto the serving tray if it looks as if he could run out, the person serving the wine in the chalice may need also to refill out of the bottle or pitcher in the sacristy. After all people are served, the servers and the minister are given their communion and then the elements are covered with the cloths.

At the end of communion:

The 4 communion servers will receive communion together after the people. Pastor will receive the communion thereafter at the end.

Whoever Pastor serves last, usually the one who collects the empty glasses, takes the bread tray from him - pauses a little - serves him, and serves him wine as well.

After his blessing, cover the trays, then slowly walk back to your seats, taking the side isles.

When the service is finished:

12. Clean up: check the “register sheets”. The ones that are filled in, go to the Pastor, or Membership Chair person. The empty ones go back to the (green) basket, along with the unused offering envelopes, Prayer Slips, and the pencils. Put the guest book back into the hymnal cabinet. Put the Hymnals back into their place. Usually there are lots of angel hands in action. Check that no bulletins are left in the pews.

13. In the back room there is the black record book. Check if it is properly filled out. Write down the number of worshippers. (including children, choir, Pastor, and do not forget yourself).
14. The banner and candle lighter go back into their cabinet. Lock it. (Give the key to the person who will be in charge the following week, or the Pastor).
15. Return the pillows and the activity bags

If you come to the church at 11:30 am (1/2 hour before the service starts), you will have plenty of time to do the preparations.

Detailed Checklist for 2 greeters and 2 ushers:

It is nice if you have 2 persons of different nationality, if possible.

Greeters:

1. Be there 15 minutes before the service starts
2. The Worship Chairperson has put the little black table (Host Church's offering box) in the entry hall, next to the swinging door into the Sanctuary. She/He placed bulletins provided by the Printer Volunteer on the table.
3. Wear nametag (provided in the guest book), to enable those you are greeting to use your name.
4. Greet arrivals with a warm smile and hand them bulletins.
5. Tell visitors: "Would you like to sign the VCC Guest Book". (Don't worry if you mistake a long-standing member of the church for a first-time visitor. It happens to us all, and it is a good way to get to know people).
6. Invite visitors and new persons to the coffee hour and indicate where this takes place.
7. When the service starts, take the table and all inside the sanctuary swinging door.
8. NEW: At the end of the service one of you be an "exit-er": While Pastor greets the people at the regular exit door, you stand at the other exit to say: "Thank you for being here" ... "Have a nice week!"
9. Go to coffee hour and welcome visitors and others standing alone. Introduce them to someone else.

Ushers:

1. The 2 ushers stay in the back to help latecomers get a bulletin and find seats.
2. For the Taking of Offerings
the 2 ushers take a basket each from the back of the church. - (When there is choir, a choir member brings the choir offering down earlier in the service and gives the number of persons in the choir). - Walk up to the altar together on the last stanza of the Hymn of the Day/ or after the sermon. While passing the basket, each on one side, count the worshippers. (Add the persons in the choir and the children, who went to Sunday School,

the Pastor and yourself. Write the number on a paper in the offering basket or remember it. After the service the Worship person enters the number in the record book on the windowsill in the vestry.)

3. Before the collected offerings are taken to the front, the Prayer Request slips are taken out, those with the same type of request, i.e. health, are put together and all of them are given to pastor when the offering is taken forward. Walk back through the side isles.
4. For Communion Service Sunday: the 2 ushers come forward before the Distribution of the Elements, to guide enough people (10 for each side), row-by-row, to the altar to form a semi circle. Take communion with the last group.
5. Invite visitors and new persons to the coffee hour and indicate where this takes place.

Short list of Duties of 2 Greeters (preferably of different nationality)

1. Be on duty not later than 11:45 AM
2. Wear name tag
3. Greet people warmly
4. Ask visitors if they would like to sign the guestbook
5. Distribute bulletins
6. Come into sanctuary with singing of first hymn
7. At the end of the service one of you be an “exit-er”: While Pastor greets the people at the regular exit door, you stand at the other exit to say: “Thank you for being here” ... “Have a nice week!”
8. Go to coffee hour and welcome visitors and others standing alone. Introduce them to someone else.

(One greeter stands on the inside of front door. Greets the people and directs visitors to sign the guest book, if they desire.

The second greeter stands at the sanctuary door and hands people the bulletin.)

Short list of Duties of 2 Ushers

1. Sit in back to help latecomers get a bulletin and find seats
2. Take the offering when announced. **While passing the basket, count the worshippers. Write the number on a paper in the offering basket.**
3. Communion Ushers guide 20 people to the front in an orderly fashion
4. Invite visitors and new people to the coffee hour and indicate where this takes place

Questions and Answers we dealt with:

Q: Shall greeters be separate from ushers, or the same persons?

A: Separate, but same persons is ok too

Q: Shall greeters, ushers, communion servers be trained?

A: Yes, instructed

Job description for the Volunteer Co-ordinator (for donors of flowers, readers and greeters/ushers)

1. - Circulate the signup sheet for Volunteers (Greeters, Ushers for offering and communions, Scripture reader, Flower giver) on a clipboard, during the church service, every month or 2 months. (There is a short job description for greeters and ushers behind the sign up sheet) (Q: should the flower dedications be rephrased if they are not perfectly phrased? A: No, reflects our cultural diversity)

2. - Type names in signup sheet and send a copy by email to:

Pastor, vccoffice@chello.at

the Bulletin Provider (William Liang), williamliang@aon.at by Wednesday eve

the Moderator (Dave Wiberg), d.wiberg@kabsi.at

Worship Chairperson (Linda Bednar), Linda.Bednar@reflex.at

3. - Pastor informs the readers of their reading

4. - Remind the volunteers before it is their turn, if possible

NB: during Fellowship time, the person could be available to see if any additional names can be added. Sometimes the clipboard does not get to both sides of the aisle; as well as some people come late to worship and/or need to think about it. I would certainly help the person try to contact some newer folks that they might not yet know.

Pastor

Special Services with special preparations done in the past

Palm Sunday, 5 April 2009

Meeting on the Graben/corner Dorotheergasse at 11:55

Someone will come and provide 40 pussy willow branches.

The procession will be lead by Pastor and 3 members of our choir, who will lead the singing from the Graben to the VCC.

12h at the church the big glass doors will be open for the procession to move into the sanctuary.

There will be no organ prelude. Instead,

the service will start with the choir singing a processional hymn when the group arrives from the Graben.

Easter Sunday, 12 April 2009

Communion Sunday

Linda Bednar brings in the wooden cross, which she stored during the year.

Sita will provide greenery and flowers bought f.e. at "Billa" and cut the stems shorter.

The children will have been asked to bring flowers to church on this Sunday.

Before the service starts, we decorate the cross with greenery and place it before the altar.

During the Time with the Children, the children will come forward and decorate the cross with the flowers.(Or we have done it during the first hymn- the children walk down to the front and we decorate while all are singing.)

At the end of the service the congregation will be able to sing the Halleluiahs Chorus under the leadership of the VCC Choir. Thereafter, there will be an organ postlude.

Pentecost Sunday

- We shall do the Pentecost readings in the different languages like we did last year.

The readings will be Acts 2:1-36

In 10-11 portions

Please organize the readers (last year: 5 EU, 3 Asian, 3 African languages)

We will have the readings printed in the bulletin insert with verses given.

Each reader will say which vers/es she/he is reading in her/his mother tongue.

This way the audience will be able to follow where they are in the text.

Please encourage the readers to wear their national costumes (it was so colorful last year!)

Advent Sundays

An Advent wreath is prepared (or donated by someone) and is placed on one of the black tables placed in front of the altar. The Pastor asks a family with children to read a short message and prayer in lighting the advent candles at the beginning of the service each week of Advent.

Christmaspageant

One Sunday in Dec. a play is done most often by the Sunday School and songs being sung also by the congregation. Co-ordination needs to be done between Pastor, organist and Sunday School usually taken care of the leader of the pageant. (We have also done an adult Pageant when we have had very few children).

Christmas Eve Service, at 10 pm, 24 December 2008 (9pm 2010 + 2011 with only 107 attending)

There is nothing normal that night!

190 Bulletins are needed for this service of songs and readings, many more than for the Sunday services (There are usually 150-160 guests and fewer regulars than usual).

There shall be more ushers: at both entrances and ushers to guide visitors up the dark staircase to the balcony for additional seating.

Before the service, candles with holders need to be laid down in the pews where the hymnals are placed.

At the end of the service, the candles are lit one to the next and the congregation proceeds out the side doors into the courtyard, singing.

The ushers are needed again at this time, at the staircase from the balcony and at the doors into the courtyard.

The organist shall keep playing the background music to the songs which will be sung in the courtyard.

COMMUNION PREPARATIONS AND SERVICE (Linda Bednar, July 2012)

1. PREPARATIONS: The things used for preparing communion are stored in the cupboard in the hallway to the right of the sanctuary. In this cupboard at the bottom left are the cloths, baskets, and pitchers. The large cloth hangs in the back over the wooden bar. The trays with the individual glasses and the chalice are in the small room (sacristy) to the left front of the sanctuary, in the wall cabinet behind the double big doors- neck high on the left.

The sexton, Hr. Bela (or his substitute), provides the cut-up bread and a bottle of red wine, which should have been opened. We provide the roll and the grape juice.

There is a large silver tray on which the cut-up bread is placed and, on one side, also communion wafers (Oblaten).

The trays with the individual glasses are to be filled with the small pitchers with:

- top tray- grape juice (with the embroidered band hooked around it);
- second tray with wine
- third tray the inner rings with grape juice.

A small silver tray covered with a paper napkin has the **individual roll** on it. (This is brought by whoever is preparing the communion- any round type of roll that the minister uses during the words of institution where he then breaks it.)

The chalice is half filled with wine. (Not too full so it does not get spilled as it is carried with the cloth covering it.)

The altar is covered with the long altar cloth, seeing that it is in the middle. (When you stand behind the altar) The trays with glasses are placed on the left side and the cut up bread on the right side (to be covered with the larger 2 cloths with crosses on them, the crosses pointing to the front). A cloth napkin should be laid on the altar just right of the middle where the chalice will be placed.

The larger straw basket with a paper towel in it is placed on one side on the chairs up front, near the Sacristy, and it is good to inform the people who are serving the communion where it will be placed! The wine bottle or small pitcher filled with wine should be in the sacristy in case the chalice needs to be refilled and also the person serving the chalice should be informed where it will be placed.

° When communion is being served, **4 people** are needed to assist the minister.

DURING THE SERVICE: After the offering, when the two ushers place the offering baskets on the altar, two of the communion servers follow them carrying the chalice and the roll, each covered with the 2 smaller cloths and again the crosses pointing to the front, and place them in the middle of the altar.

The minister begins with the bread (the individual roll can also be broken into small pieces and added to the tray with bread, after the minister has said the words of institution), then the person carrying the grape juice follows, then the person with the individual glasses of wine, then the one with the chalice, and lastly the person with the empty basket that collects the empty glasses. After one round the group stands behind the table as the minister dismisses the people. All is repeated as often as needed. The person with the grape juice may need to transfer glasses of grape juice from the 3rd tray unto the serving tray if it looks as if s/he could run out, the person serving the wine in the chalice may need also to refill out of the bottle or pitcher in the sacristy. After all people have been served, the servers and the minister are given their communion and then the elements are re-covered with the cloths.

AFTER THE SERVICE: all of the communion things are taken to the kitchen, the glasses etc. washed and dried and replaced on the communion shelf. The napkin and any other cloths that have become soiled should be taken home and washed.

The unused wine & grape juice from the cups can be poured back into the bottle, grape juice and bread can be taken home and used. In case a big bottle of grape juice is used, it can be divided up into 2 small plastic bottles and **frozen** for further use.

If you have questions contact Linda Bednar, tel. 865 26 10.

Job description and specification for the VCC Sunday Bulletin Editor (updated: September 2008)

Introduction:

The job of the VCC Sunday Bulletin Editor is basically to ensure that the VCC Sunday Bulletin is edited, formatted, printed and delivered on time for distribution among the congregation each Sunday.

The Sunday Bulletin is an important document. It contains the Order of Worship which gives structure, and keeps the congregation focused on the main reasons they gather to worship. It places the theme of the service into a meaningful pattern of participation for all concerned.

Finally, it presents a written record and public face of who the VCC is to visitors and regulars alike each Sunday. The final aesthetic of the Sunday Bulletin should support and reinforce its role by: looking reasonably neat and readable; have accurate and timely information of who is doing what during the Order of Worship, and subsequent Announcements / Calendar.

The Job:

Note: the actual printing and delivery of the Sunday Bulletin has now been taken over by a team of volunteer Bulletin printers. The Bulletin Editor oversees this function, makes sure it is carried out smoothly, and that there are enough volunteers to do the job. A job description of the volunteer Bulletin printer is included separately, together with a sample Bulletin which could be used as a template.

- type, edit, reformat and update the information given by the Pastor (deadline: Thursday) each week into the Sunday Bulletin;
- receive information for announcements from members of the congregation (deadline: Wednesday evening);
- pass the final draft to the scheduled Bulletin printer on Friday morning (or previously agreed timing) for printing and delivery;
- update the VCC Sunday Bulletin webpage with the final draft of the current Bulletin;*
- maintain and update the VCC Sunday Bulletin website*;
- maintain a schedule of volunteer Bulletin printers and ensure that there are enough volunteers to do the job each week.

* The VCC Sunday Bulletin webpage was set up by the current Bulletin Editor for easy information dissemination to the rest of the congregation. Whoever takes over the job can still do it without the webpage.

The Person:

- adequate English language skills (not necessarily native speaker);
- word-processing skills;
- own PC and Internet access;
- ability to liaise with various sources of information pertaining the Sunday Bulletin: Pastor, volunteer co-ordinator, and anyone who wants to put in an announcement.

Submitted by: William Liang, September 2008

☞ VIENNA COMMUNITY CHURCH ☛

21 September 2008

12:00 Noon

Welcome Visitors! Please sign the worship registration slip on the pew rack near the centre aisle, pass it to your seatmates, then back to the centre aisle.

- = Congregation Please Stand

GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Organ Prelude Preludium Es-Dur, BWV 552/1 J. S. Bach

Greeting and Call to Worship

- **Hymn** "O Christians Haste" #482
- **Prayer of Confession (Unison)**
God of mercy, you sent us Jesus to seek and to save the lost. We confess that we are lost: lost in our selfishness, lost in our pride, lost in ignoring the pleas of others. We see ourselves better than others, even though deep down we doubt our own worth. Have mercy on us, forgive our many sins, and redirect our living.
- **Declaration of Forgiveness**
The prophet Joel said, "Return to the Lord your God, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." May we come to the Cross, seeing the results of our sin, but also seeing the hope of a loving God. Look with compassion upon us, and direct us to love and have mercy upon one another.

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you all.

People: And also with you.

- **Hymn** "Here We Gather as God's People" #294
Here we gather as God's people with our friends from far and near;
Let our voices sound with praises knowing Christ has called us here.
Now we seek and greet each other, now in joy approach our friends.
Hence we mingle, bound together as to all our love extends.
- **Passing the Peace**

Announcements

Louise Pickart

Godspeed

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture Philippians 1:21-30; Matt. 20:1-16 Reader: Ronan LeBras

Time with the Children

Bags: Because Life isn't Fair

Hymn # 113 (First Verse sung while children move forward)

"Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so."

Sermon

"It's Not Fair?"

Rev. Randall Mundt

• **Hymn**

"Open My Eyes"

#586

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Offertory

VCC Choir: "Come, O Jesus, Holy One"

R.G. Newton

The Doxology (#46)

Presentation of the Offerings

Prayers of the Congregation

Prayer Cycle Countries: Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

The Lord's Prayer (in your own language)

• **Closing Hymn**

"O God our Help"

#67

• **Benediction and Congregational Amen (#312)**

• **Dismissal**

Leader: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord with enthusiasm!

People: "Thanks be to God!"

Postlude

Fuge Es-Dur, BWV 552/2

J. S. Bach

Flowers today are given by Ronan LeBras in celebration of Elena Popescu's life.

Prayer Request forms can be found at the ends of the pews. Please print your request clearly. Place them in the offering basket.

Nursery for babies and children up to 4 years in the Lutheran church next door is offered during the worship service. Please contact an usher or nursery attendant, Katrina Mundt, if you would like to leave your child in the nursery.

II. SERVING US IN WORSHIP

- Worship Setup:** Sita Weinrich, Souwanit Sonnichler
- Greeters:** Cindy Xin, Geoff Edington-Cheater
- Usher & Offering:** To be announced
- Organist:** Henriette Effenberger-Nagy
- Choir Director:** Sabine Humber
- Nursery Attendant:** Katrina Mundt
- "Mr. Fellowship":** Georg Vohryzka
- Printing of Bulletin:** Joice Louhanapessy

CALENDAR and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mundt's Musings: "The test of your fairness is how fair you are to those who are not fair".

TODAY is the deadline for material to be included in the October issue of the VCC online newsletter *The Golden Cord*. Please send your articles to BHF4VCC@aol.com, or hand it to Brenda Fox after worship service.

Indian Luncheon: Many, many thanks to all who came to enjoy the food and company and to those who helped. Donations amounted to Euro 619, which will go towards the VCC General Fund.

We hoped you received the VCC Voice to communicate upcoming events. If you would like to be added to the email list, send an email to vccoffice@chello.at.

Sunday Morning Bible Study – we are beginning to study the Gospel of Luke at 10:30 am at the back of the Chattanooga Cafe. Please come and join us!

Volunteer (for Greeter, Usher, Scripture reader, Flowers) Coordinator: We are looking for someone to volunteer for this position. Please contact the pastor if interested.

Kinderbags-Activity bags are provided for the children to use in the church and during worship. Please leave these bags with the VCC hymnals so that the children will have them for the next week.

Announcements for each Sunday bulletin, submit by Wednesday evening to williamliang@aon.at. For a sneak preview of the upcoming bulletin, visit <http://members.aon.at/william/VCCBulletin.htm> (after Wednesday).

Church Office/ Manse: Schelleingasse 2/6, A-1040 Vienna
Tel/Fax: (+43 1) 505-5233, e-mail: vccoffice@chello.at

Funding of this 50 year old church is dependent upon the gifts of members, friends and visitors. ERSTE Bank Account#: 287 538 49700 & Bank Routing Code (BLZ): 20111. Checks and all currencies welcome. Direct transfer of your gifts electronically are encouraged. See website for more details. US\$ Checks made out to the AFCU (American Foreign and Christian Union) are tax deductible for U.S. Citizens. Please designate your check for Vienna. A receipt for your contribution can be obtained upon request to the Treasurer.

<http://members.aon.at/william/VCCBulletin.htm>
VCC Sunday Bulletin Webpage

THE VIENNA COMMUNITY CHURCH

in the Reformierte Stadtkirche

Dorotheergasse 16, 1010 Vienna

The international English-speaking congregation of the Vienna Community Church is ecumenical in spirit and broadly tolerant of a diversity of Christian points of view. We seek to provide an atmosphere in which all people may be renewed in their Christian faith to meet the challenges of living in a new and diverse community and world.

Your search ends here

Your search for **truth**

Jesus Christ is the truth and is proclaimed here

Your search for **fellowship**

We support and uphold one another in our common lives

Your search for **service**

We provide opportunities for service within our congregation and the world.

*Please join us for coffee
following the worship
service.*

Pastor: Reverend Randall Mundt

<http://www.ViennaCommunityChurch.com>



Philippians 1:21-30

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Matthew 20:1-16

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

"About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.