

Banyule Babble

The Newsletter of the Anglican Parish of Banyule

Holy Spirit Watsonia + St Andrew's Rosanna + St John's Heidelberg

DECEMBER
2009

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DON DECLARES.

HOW TO HOLD ON TO IT.

Hold on to it like
you hold a day old
chicken



Hold on to it like
you hold a live fish.



Hold on to it like you
hold a horse



Hold on to it like you
hold a bowl of soup.



Hold on to it like you
hold a door open for
the Queen Mother.



Letting go of it is
just as difficult and
shall be dealt with
at some later stage.



How to hold on to it. Michael Leunig

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

A time to seek and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to throw away.

Ecclesiastes 3:1,6

Come; leave what you cling to,
Lay down what you clutch
And find with hands empty
That hearts can hold much.

John Bell, *Sing Hey for the Carpenter*

Letting go seems to be something of a theme for me at the moment. I have just moved house, the twelfth time since I left my parental home. Once again I have packed up my belongings into cardboard boxes. And once again I have asked myself the question "Do I really need to keep this..." Last time I moved house I came across a box of candle making supplies I had acquired when I was leading a youth group. I realized then that I had moved this box six times, and had not used it

again, so it was time to let it go. It is not easy to let go of things. We seemed to be programmed to acquire, not to let go. I find this is especially true of my books. You can spend a lot of time with a book, and a book becomes almost like a friend, even the not-so-good ones. There seems to be something cruel about consigning a friendly book to the op shop, the parish fair, or worse, to the recycle bin. But this year I let go of several boxes of books. But now at least there is some space on the shelves, some space that may accommodate some new books. Some new friends?

It is not just our possessions that we may need to let go of from time to time. As a parent I think one of the hardest tasks is letting go, letting go of the kids. After all, you spend so much time and energy in bringing them to adulthood that it is sometimes hard to let go of all of your hopes and dreams for them and let them make their own way in the world. But if our

children are to be their own people, parents need to let them go.

Letting go. Perhaps a part of the task of ageing gracefully is being prepared to let go, to accept that we may not be able to do now all the things that we could do when we were younger. Perhaps the final letting go will occur at our death, where we will let go of the trappings of this world in order to find our place in the heart of God.

I am about to do some more letting go. I am about to let go of a ministry that I have had for ten years in View Bank and Watsonia and six years in the rest of Banyule Parish. It has not been perfect, I am very aware of my failures and deficiencies, but some of it has been good. It is not easy to let go of the relationships that have been built up over a long time. It is not easy to let go of all that we have shared together. Well, some of it will remain. You and I have all been changed by all that we have experienced together, some of it we will carry with us as we go. Some of it, hopefully the Godly part of it, has been incorporated into the core of our being. But I will give myself to a new group of people in a new place; and you will remain to journey with other leaders. And perhaps to go to places that I am not able to lead you.

It is time to let go.

Jesus seemed to know the knack of letting go. He who said, "What will it profit anyone to gain the world and to lose their soul?" gave up everything, even life itself, on the cross. And in so doing he opened the way for us to be embraced by the love of God, which will never let go of us.

It is time to let go.

Donald



This Month – December

Wednesday 16th: 1 pm Worship@1: 'Sitting gently with God for those who find Christmas difficult', at Holy Spirit Watsonia

Thursday 24th Christmas Eve: 5 pm Children's Carol Service at St John's; 5.30 pm HC at Holy Spirit; 11.30 Midnight Service at St John's

Friday 25th Christmas Day: 8 am HC at St Andrew's; 9 am HC at St John's

Wanted

- Someone who might like to take over as Rental Coordinator for our halls and vicarages
- Claves (90 mm dowel, 130 mm long with ends rounded) for mainly music: leave at office

Money – October

Income: Giving: \$6,585.20
Other: \$15,464.69
Total: \$22,049.89

Expenses: \$25,652.24

Loss: \$3,602.35

Giving was down. Income was boosted by \$7686.46 for long service leave – we only get a payout when someone takes long service leave, so this isn't usual. Expenses included \$3412 for superannuation, which we pay quarterly. The treasurer is concerned.

Christmas and January Services

Thurs 24th Dec 5 pm Children's Carol Service at *Heidelberg*
5.30 pm Holy Communion at *Watsonia*
11.30 pm Midnight service at *Heidelberg*

Fri 25th Dec 8 am Holy Communion at *Rosanna*
9 am Holy Communion at *Heidelberg*

Sat 26th Dec *No service at Watsonia*

Sun 27th Dec 10 am Holy Communion at *Rosanna only*

Sat 2nd Jan *No service at Watsonia*

Sun 3rd Jan 10 am Holy Communion at *Heidelberg only*

Sat 9th Jan 5.30 pm Holy Communion at *Watsonia*

Sun 10th Jan 10 am Holy Communion at *Rosanna only*

Sat 16th Jan 5.30 pm Holy Communion at *Watsonia*

Sun 17th Jan 10 am Holy Communion at *Heidelberg only*

Sat 23rd Jan 5.30 pm Holy Communion at *Watsonia*

Sun 24th Jan 10 am Holy Communion at *Rosanna only*

Sat 30th Jan *No service at Watsonia*

Sun 31st Jan 10 am Combined Parish Service at *Heidelberg only*

Our locum

The Rev'd **Jim Cowdrey** will be joining us from 6th December. He will be working in the parish for three days a week throughout December and January.

St John's Ladies' Evening Fellowship

The Annual General Meeting of the Ladies Fellowship was held on October 28th in the Church Hall. There was an excellent attendance, thirty in all, including a number of male visitors who were very welcome. The Treasurer gave her report on finances which, at the moment are not particularly robust, but it was decided that for the next twelve months we are able to keep the membership dues at \$10. Shirley Fry took the chair for the election of office bearers. Those nominated and elected are:

President: Lorna Holliday *Secretary:* Pauline Holbery

Treasurer: Crystal Dunne *Vice-President:* Maureen Shand

Pauline conveyed her thanks to the committee for their assistance and support throughout the year. The President thanked Pauline for her efficient and untiring work which has made 2009 so successful and also thanked each and every member for their support and cooperation. Bruce Nethercote from Chocolatier was our guest speaker to tell us all about chocolates. He took us through the making of chocolates right from where the ingredients are sourced, to the finished product. He had lots of samples for us to try and they were "out of this world". There were also chocolates for sale which were greeted with great enthusiasm. Bruce is a very entertaining speaker and everyone was smiling at the end of the evening.

Lorna Holliday

I would like to wish everyone a Joyous Christmas and thank you all for your support throughout the year. Our next meeting will be on February 24th 2010 at 7.45 p.m., speaker to be announced.

Pauline Holbery

St Andrew's Mission Boxes

BCA: \$707.50; Leprosy: \$539.60; CMS: 571.50

Total: \$1818.60

Thanks to all — June Lockhart

The Parish Spring Fair

From positive comments at the Evaluation meeting, the hard work involved, and exhausted workers, all agreed the atmosphere was so friendly with the crowd (and there *was* a crowd) enjoying the day and not in a hurry to leave.

Yes – there will be another Spring Fair at St. Andrew's – 6th November 2010, and already ideas are afloat for improvement.

To everyone involved this year, mere words of thanks seem inadequate but thanks anyway! Every one worked so hard to set up, prepare, sell and then the enormous task to pack up. Thanks so much for the mighty effort.

We are growing together as a great team and we can do the impossible through Him who strengthens us and to Him we give the glory.

Mavis Lean

Net figures for the day

Books	\$887.10
Cakes	1106.35
Craft	1426.35
Happy Café	1039.80
Lucky Dips	110.00
Mystery Parcels	531.00
Plants (1)	769.60
Plants (2)	273.20
Treasure Shoppe	1130.00
Sweets	185.50
White Elephant	423.25
Face Painting	52.00
Wood Turning	255.00
BBQ	501.40
Cake Raffle	188.00
Treasure Bags	168.65
Hamper Raffle	293.20
Doll Raffle	19.00
Play Group	40.00
Donations	120.00
Total	\$9519.40

E&oe — Mike Terry

Call for publicity ideas for 2010 Spring Fair

With the success of the publicity for the 2009 Spring Fair fresh in our minds, please forward ideas for an interesting theme for publicity for the 2010 Spring Fair to Jim Royston ((H) 9440 7549 or jimroyston@hotmail.com).

Also, ideas for press coverage for the St John's Autumn Fair would be gratefully received.

Jim Royston

Annual General Meeting

The 2009 AGM was subdued by the awareness that Donald is about to leave us. Donald added to his published report by thanking the Vestry and Wardens for their work, thanking Mike Terry for his work as Treasurer, and thanking the people of the parish, stressing that we are three centres, but one parish.

Mike Terry presented the accounts for the church financial year. There was a book loss of \$31,271.48, but to this should be added \$5783 of insurance credit we have to repay, and \$5111 of money owed to Donald. However there was \$40,240 spent on Watsonia that came from earmarked funds, so there was a 'real operating loss' of \$1926.

Mike pointed to a decline in giving due to the decline in numbers, a problem for the future.

Philip then gave a presentation on ideas for the future of the parish:

The Future of Banyule Parish: Visions & Dreams for 2010 and beyond

May 2009: **Discussions** about a Mission Action Plan with Rika Mason

August 1: **Parish Retreat Day** at Amberley (50 people)

22 November 2009: **AGM** presented with some ideas/options for the future

#1 TASK – a Parish Vision Statement: Create a Vision Statement which will guide our directions

Fundamental questions:

- Why do we exist?
- Who are we?
- What is our life as God's people really about?
- How can we "be church" rather than "go to church"?

From our retreat day comes our dream:

**Dynamic Alive Open Diverse
Young(er) Effervescent Changing
Filled with growing people Vibrant
Caring Faithful Honouring to Christ
Engaged Fun**

Key words:

**ALIVE GROWING FAITHFUL
ENGAGED DIVERSE DYNAMIC OPEN**

Example vision statements:

- "To be a blessing to the world"
- "To see God's people grow in their faith and knowledge and confidence in God"
- "To reach out to seekers who are genuinely searching for meaning"
- "To build a close and loving community which sustains us and blesses others."

Redefine who we are, and learn to think of "being church" rather than "going to church"

Some ways we might express our life in 2010:

Staffing

1. Priest in charge
2. Associate minister
3. A family worker (20 hours)

4. A part time secretary
5. One theological student (12 hours/week) for the year (= \$3000)
6. Consultant / Administrator: To manage our properties, hire, pay etc.?

Staff team commitment:

- Staff **meet daily** (open to others in parish) to say Morning Prayer (4x per week)
- Staff **retreat** 4 times in the year, for planning and strategic prayer together
- Each **staff/priest takes an individual retreat day** one day each month for "recharge"

Job description for a children's/family worker: mainly music / family service / RE in schools visiting / baptisms

Anne Maher will join us part time in 2010.

Service patterns and rotations

- *Begin a monthly family service* at both Heidelberg and Rosanna (different weeks, no communion)
- NB: This will impact other familiar patterns (Watsonia – develop a unique style?)
- *Combined parish service of prayer and praise* on 5th Sundays (4 per year)
- *Midweek Holy Communion only once per month* at each of the centres:
Week 1: Heidelberg
Week 2: Watsonia
Week 3: Rosanna

Baptism policy

- *A Baptism Preparation Programme:* run by a team of people, including one priest, the family worker, and 2 volunteers for each course.
- 4 courses to be run in the year (4 sessions each – no baptism without preparation).
- Baptisms to be held in our Family Services.
- Baptism dates: on *Family service* days alternating between Heidelberg and Rosanna (limit of 3 per service).
- A *Thanksgiving service* for a child can also be offered at other times.

Each staff member to take a share of allocated regular visiting to our members

Pastoral care: Pastoral Partners program

- Meet once per term, in week 3 of that term, on Sunday afternoon, or over lunchtime
- A team of coordinators/ presenters
- Training dates: Sundays 14 Feb, 25 April, 25 July, 24 Sept

Spiritual growth and building up the body of Christ

- *Vestry retreat and planning day:* 'catch the vision': 6 February 2010
- *Hold a Parish retreat* once in the year (15 – 17 October): A weekend? Or a day?
- *A sermon preaching plan:* Ask the congregations: what do we need to learn?
- *Bible Study groups: a way of growing in faith and knowledge*
Encourage existing ones:
Tuesday afternoon Rosemary Bellair
Friday mornings Joan Shilton
Wednesday night Margaret Billett
- *Adopt one:*
Wednesday night (train a leader)

Outreach

Wedding preparation

- Interviews by appointment.
- 4 sessions *wedding preparation* for each couple, including "Prepare".

- Wedding fee to be increased to \$1000 for the preparation and wedding.

- Aim to draw in 2 volunteers to help with the training and preparation.

RE in schools:

Add 4 new teachers in 2010:

Banyule Primary: (Philip + another)
Heidelberg Primary: (Family worker + 1 other)
Watsonia primary: Elsie Storr

Meditation group

Advertise in local area, paper, shopfronts

Regular **nursing home** visitations:

Strathalan, Iris Grange (once per quarter)

Community seminars

In local cafes: guest speakers on topics of interest (e.g. issues like money, environment, enneagram, growing old, meditation, spiritual awareness)

The Still Centre Retreat Team

- 1 retreat and 2 Quiet Days
- 1 school retreat in 2010

Practical and physical arrangements to meet our needs

Improve the plant at Heidelberg (accommodate extra staff, make the office more professional):

- Modernise the office arrangement,
- paint and install glass doors,
- new locks,
- improve the lounge seating area,
- clean up the Hall to make it more attractive

An example of an expenses "wish list":

Double glass doors into main office, with glass window	\$500
Glass doors from office into vicar's office (professional accountability and visibility)	\$300
Glass window at top of door in Associate's office (accountability and visibility)	\$100
One single entry lock on main doors into Hall (safety)	\$250
Single laminated bench with cupboards (storage along side wall in main office)	\$300
TOTAL:	\$2800

An idea for the next few years:

Develop outside patio into covered area/entrance verandah \$3000

Where do we go from here?

Do we want to accept these ideas and endorse them?

What will be our version of:

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..."

IN SUMMARY:

2010 strategic plans

- New staff arrangements
- New family worker
- Keep caring for the traditional people
- Changing but responsive patterns
- More strategic outreach
- Pastoral care coordination
- Making plans for the longer term

**ALIVE GROWING FAITHFUL
ENGAGED DIVERSE DYNAMIC OPEN**

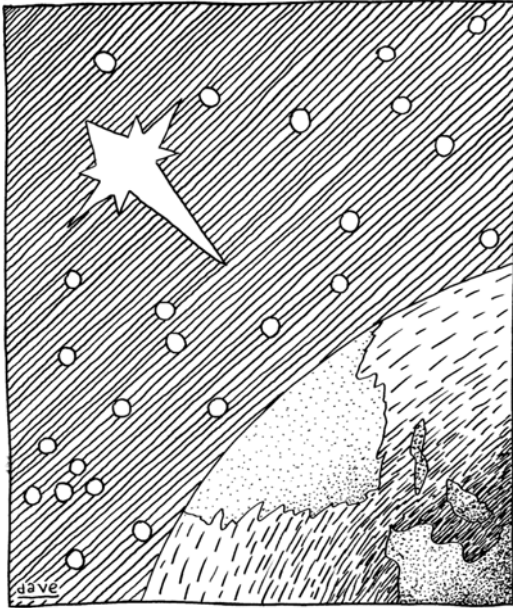
The meeting **affirmed** Philip's vision.

Vestry, churchwardens, Incumbency Committee, and auditors were all elected to be the same as last year.

Peter McKay

Christmas

He came down to earth from heaven



who is God and Lord of all

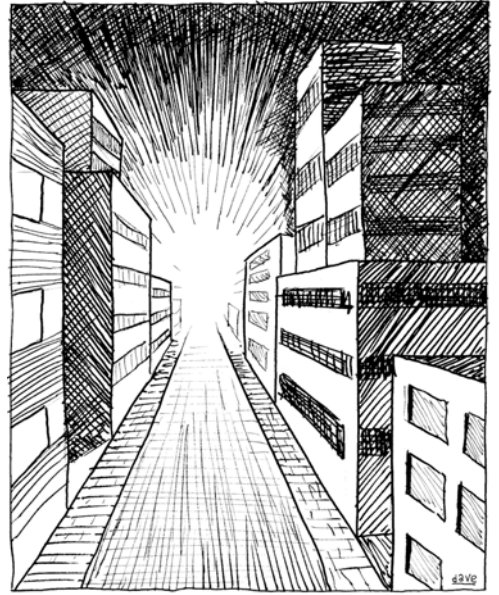
Christmas lights,
Christmas delights –
The time is rushing by.
Must do this
Must do that –
So much to be done is the cry.

Let us pause
and not forget
what we are celebrating;
It is the birth
of our dear Lord
which we are now awaiting.

So celebrate –
enjoy yourself
and spread the Christmas story.
A child was born in Bethlehem,
to reign with God in glory.

Betty Kettle

in the dark streets



Shines the everlasting light

THE BELL

I KNOW WHO I AM

I am God's child (John 1:12)

I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)

I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17)

I am bought with a price (1 Cor 6:19-20)

I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)

I am a personal witness of Christ . (Acts 1:8)

I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt 5:13-14)

I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27)

I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8: 1-2)

I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant (Phil 3:20)

I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31 -34)

I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor 5:17-21)

I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)

I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)

I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom 8:35-39)

I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor 1:21-22)

I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)

I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)

I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3: 12)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)

I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15: 1-5)

I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3: 16). I am complete in Christ (Col . 2: 10)

I am hidden with Christ in God (Col . 3:3).. I have been justified (Romans 5:1)

I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)

I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected. (Phil. 1: 5)

I have been redeemed and forgiven (Col 1:14). I have been adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5)

I belong to God

Do you know

Who you are?

The Joyful Burden of Christmas

By Joan Shilton

Did I hear you say, "That sounds contradictory?" Well, I have news for you! The burden of Christmas *is* a Song of Joy.

You see, the word 'burden' has several meanings. It can be something that has to be borne: a load, a task, an obligation. It can also mean "a refrain of song; theme or gist of an utterance" (Oxford Dictionary).

Will you travel with me and see various burdens connected with the Christmas story? If you look carefully, you will discover all aspects of this interesting word as they apply to several people involved in the Christmas story.

In fact *everyone* is involved in the Christmas story, because the Lord Jesus Christ is central. He came to involve mankind with His Father, God. Every human soul is involved either by their willing acceptance of the Christmas story and the Lord of Life, or by their total rejection. There can be no half measures with God.

Mary's Burden

Mary, fresh, young, Jewish and single, had all her life ahead of her. Engaged to a godly, upstanding citizen named Joseph, she is at first fearful of the sudden appearance of an angel.

Fear gave way to submission and obedience before God. Mary was the first person to experience the Joy of Christmas.

She said, "Oh, how I praise the Lord, how I rejoice in God my Saviour", in her wonderful song of praise (Luke 1:46-7), when as God's chosen vessel she anticipated the birth of her Saviour.

But Mary's task or obligation, although joyous, was not easy.

Mary and Joseph, throughout the testing, waiting period, no matter what misunderstanding they both may have endured, held fast to the words of the angel.

First to Mary, the burden of the message was: "You will bear a Son: He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High . . . and of His kingdom there will be no end." So we have a picture of Mary's complicated burden—joyous, yet accompanied by the possible misunderstanding of fiancé, family, and friends.

Joseph's Burden

Imagine the shock for poor Joseph to find his fiancée pregnant, knowing very well it was not his child. What was he to think?

We read: "Joseph, being a man of stern principle, decided to break the engagement, but to do it quietly as he did not want to publicly disgrace her" (Matthew 1:19).

However, we find that Joseph, too, was submissive and obedient to God's messenger. The burden of the angel's message was: "The virgin shall conceive a child. She shall give birth to a Son and He shall be called Emmanuel (meaning 'God with us') (Matthew 1:23).

Joseph proved a staunch and faithful partner to Mary. When his initial fears were allayed by the angel, he married her. He supported her in obedience to God.

Together they exemplified the trust in God, the unity of purpose and mutual cherishing that married couples need today as they pass through problems and privations.

When you skim quickly over the Christmas story, do you ever stop to think of that difficult journey Joseph and the pregnant Mary had to make?

From Nazareth, Joseph was required to return many miles to Bethlehem, the place of his birth, for registration. He was of the royal line of David. Imagine how tiring and uncomfortable would be that ride on a jogging donkey. No comfortable fast taxi ride to a sterile labour ward with a brisk, efficient nursing staff and every modern convenience.

Not for Mary. Not even a comfortable room at the inn. Just an old shed.

If the landlord was busy with a full house, there could not have been much time for such trivialities as cleaning out the stable. It was here the Lord of Glory chose to be born.

The faithful Joseph called His name Jesus, because the angel had said, "You shall name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). We read in Luke 2:22 that they took the Babe to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. As a husband to Mary and guardian to the Christ-child, Joseph bore his burden, his obligations with steadfast faith and fortitude.

His burden, too, was one of joy.

Herod's Burden

Another sort of burden manifested itself heavily upon the heart of King Herod, the reigning monarch. He was suffering under the burden of jealousy at the message brought to him by wise men of the East.

Power, possessions and position meant more to him than God's re-

vealed truth. He felt threatened by the presence of the King of the Jews, the baby Jesus Christ.

Christ's presence always reveals the darkness of the soul's sin. This jealousy ate into Herod's soul and drove him to murder. There was no submission and obedience here—only rebellion and jealousy against God's Anointed, which always results in evil and destruction. Joseph, alert to God's messenger, moved his little family from Herod's threatening presence until the murderous monarch died.

In his frenzy to destroy the Baby King, Herod had issued orders in Bethlehem and surrounding areas to have all the baby boys two years and under killed. There were many heartbroken, grieving young couples some time after that first Christmas.

There are many tragic homes today, broken homes, no comfort, no faith, no vision of a loving Heavenly Father, missing out on the real Joy of Christmas.

Our Burden

This brings us to our burden.

The Christian today should have a burden this Christmas. Our burden should be the refrain of a song that the angels sang, the gist of utterance, the message that God has been sending to mankind down through the ages: "For unto us a Child is born."

Not any child, but the Lord God Incarnate. God's Word has come in flesh bringing forgiveness, salvation, joy, reconciliation—peace with God.

For the cradle can never be separated from the Cross, and the Cross can never be separated from the Resurrection and Christ's triumph over evil. Each time we celebrate the first Christmas it brings us closer to the last Christmas. Only God the Father knows the day and hour Christ will return.

Are we so cluttered up with the material, superficial burdens of a worldly Christmas, that the true burden of the full Christmas story is supplanted in our hearts?

It is not that God wants us to be heavy-hearted and cast down. Christians are the only ones who have the right to celebrate Christmas. It was our Saviour Who was born as a man, lived, died, and was resurrected, and will come in His glorified resurrection body to redeem His own.

Spread the *joy* this Christmas. *Maranatha*: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus—our Emmanuel."

© Joan Shilton

JOHN THE BAPTIST

A WORKSHEET SORT OF THING. WRITE OR DRAW IN THE GAPS

BIBLE VERSE
MARK CHAPTER 1
VERSES 1 TO 8

My favourite clothes

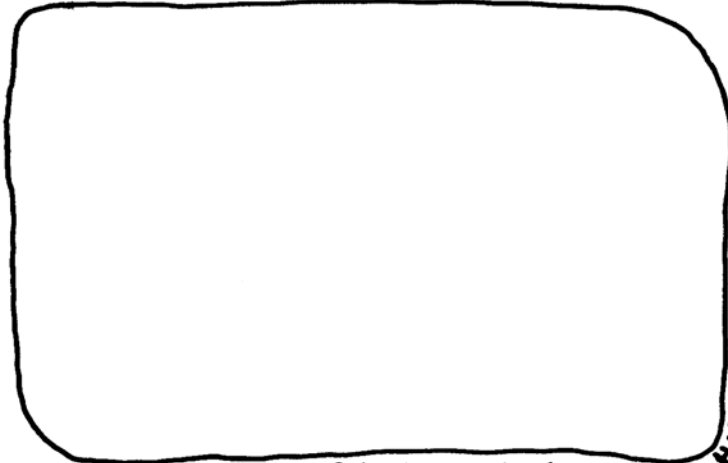


- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____



JOHN THE BAPTIST

OR



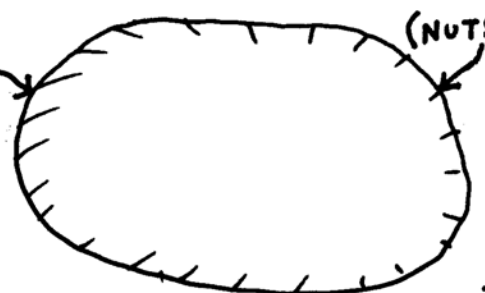
HOW DO YOU IMAGINE JOHN THE BAPTIST

Marks for style (out of 10)

- Camel hair jacket
- Leather belt
- sandals
- Sandals with socks

WHY DID JOHN THE BAPTIST HAVE SUCH AN ODD TASTE IN FOOD & CLOTHES?

WHAT WAS JOHN'S MESSAGE?



(NUTSHELL)

BAPTISM

PICTURE OR EXPLANATION

REPENTANCE

(AN EXAMPLE OF)

TOP 5 FOODS

- 5.
- 4.
- 3.
- 2.
- 1.

Locusts & honey
RECIPES:
Rank from 1 to 4

- Raw locust & honey
- locust & honey sandwich
- Deep fried locust, chips & honey
- locust curry with honey

THINGS TO TAKE TO THE DESERT



-
-
-

THINGS TO PREPARE FOR:

- _____
- _____



HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTISED OR CONFIRMED?

IF NOT WHY NOT ASK SOMEONE ABOUT IT.

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LICENCE

THE WIDOW'S MITE: Mark 12:38–44

Preached at St Andrew's on Sunday 8th November 2009 by Philip Trowse, who supplied these notes

If you want a "widow's mite", by the way, they were very common (the smallest value coin of the time) between 120 BC – 70 AD! You can buy one through the internet, set in 14 kt gold, for between \$150 and \$250!

This famous story reveals two things:

1. *The tyranny of a religious system which demanded obedience* and
2. *The call of God for a life consecrated to his service*

1. Jesus is consistently seeking to reform the Jewish religious code, which had become corrupt and missed the point of living in total submission to God. The Pharisees, for example, had rules for every occasion, and Jesus heavily criticized them.

Amongst those rules the Pharisees had laws about tithing. This was a biblical concept, commanded by God, but they missed the point of God's grace: we tithe, not because God needs our paltry money (the cattle on a thousand hills are his!) but to say thank you for his provision and to care for the poor.

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. *Mt 23:3*

We can get caught up on issues of religion, and miss the point of what it means to follow God:

E.g. *What makes a good Christian?*

You should go to church on Sunday
 You should try to be good
 You should not smoke, drink or swear
 You should live in a middle class suburb
 You should read the Bible
 You should pray regularly

Sound familiar?

But none of those things are *essential* to being a Christian!! They are all fine, but once we make a rule about it, we become just like the Pharisees!

Can you be a "good Christian" person if you never go to church?

Or not know your Bible?

Or sexually impure?

Or a compulsive liar?

Or are a heroin addict?

Of course you can!

We miss the point because we judge "good Christian" on our terms...

Because you are acceptable to God, not

because of how good you are, but because Christ died for you! And you have believed it.

The great freedom of the Christian message is that **God loves us and accepts us just as we are, we can do nothing to make him love us more; we can do nothing to make him love us less!**

Obedying laws brings death: loving God with all our heart brings life and peace.

The poor widow was trapped in a system which rolled over her:

Was Jesus pleased with the fact that she gave her last few coins to the Temple machinery? Possibly not! Maybe she needed those last coins to feed her family, and they missed out because of this law!

But what he does point out is that she gave much more (relatively speaking) than all the showy rich people. Her sacrifice was greater. Did the sacrifice please Jesus? In the sense that she gave willingly, and with a generous heart, yes! For God "loves a cheerful giver".

2. The other point of this story, which we pick up more often, is this one: God does not need our money, but he wants all of us.

The widow gave out of her poverty, and she gave of herself till it hurt. This is an example of the sacrifice of praise which God wants.

The mite was worth so little in itself, but in the hands of the widow it became a precious offering:

The point of the story is that we can give heaps, but it is the proportion or value to us that God sees, not the gross amount.

Bill Gates apparently has given more than \$28 billion to charity through his Gates Foundation!

Kerry Packer made a \$10m donation to charity in 2000.

These are impressive figures!!

People are impressed, but God is not!

The message here is that we should be aiming to give our lives genuinely for God, and not doing it to impress anyone else...He is the one who should be pleased...it is to him that we will give an account...

On the other hand, in a radical interpretation of the gospel, St Francis took this as a call to embrace poverty as a gift!

(Give away your cloak...he who has two pairs of shoes, give one away...for God loves a cheerful giver....God cares for the flowers...how much more does he care for you?)

He doesn't want us to hold anything back. My possessions? ("I've worked hard for all I've got!" But you couldn't work

without the health God gives!)

My house?

My lovely car?

My wife?

My children?

My career?

My weekly salary?

My body?

My precious grandchildren?

All of it belongs to God. He lets me use it, but he demands that I put Him first! And this is nothing new!

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."

Take my life, and let it be,

consecrated Lord to thee...

Take my silver and my gold...

Not a mite would I withhold...

So this story challenges us to put away our religiosity, and to put God first. This is the meaning of a *consecrated life*: set apart for God (fits in with the idea of us being "saints" or holy).

Fred Craddock, in an address to ministers, caught the practical implications of consecration. "To give my life for Christ appears glorious," he said. "To pour myself out for others ... to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom—I'll do it. I'm ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory.

"We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking a \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table—'Here's my life, Lord. I'm giving it all.'

"But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid's troubles instead of saying, 'Get lost.' Go to a committee meeting. Give up a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home.

"Usually giving our life to Christ isn't glorious. It's done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it's harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul."

Daily Prayer: "We consecrate this day to your service...may all our thoughts, words and actions be pleasing to you..."

"A relationship in which you hold nothing back" = a recipe for a broken heart!!!

Many of us know how painful it is when we have given ourselves wholeheartedly to another person! They always let us down! With the Lord, of course, he offers us life in return, and promises never to walk out on us.

Philip Trowse

Vestry Notes

Meeting of Tuesday 17th November 2009 at 7.30 pm

BUSINESS ARISING

- Names in prayer petitions: Surnames must only be used with the **express permission** of the person concerned.
- Parish directory: Still in progress
- Anne's position next year has been signed off.

CLERGY REPORT

- Amberley booked for Parish retreat October 15th–17th.
- Jim Cowdrey is to act as locum during December and January.
- Christmas services set. The 10 am service in January to alternate between Heidelberg and Rosanna.
- Vestry planning day – Sat. 6th February.

WARDENS' REPORT

- Rosanna**
New tenants to move into the vicarage.
- Heidelberg**
Agreed to have the trees lopped to reduce the leaf litter in the gutters.
- Watsonia**
The door has been 'fixed'.
Vestry agreed to get evaporative cooling installed.
Some windows in Op Shop are nailed open for the summer.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- We need to consider a Rental Co-ordinator to co-ordinate the hiring and rental of properties.
- Mike expressed grave concern about low attendances and resulting low giving. None of the centres could exist on their own – we are being carried by our income from the Op. Shops, rents and hiring fees.

It was moved that the treasurer's report be accepted and accounts to the value of \$25,652.24 as presented be approved for payment.

OPP. SHOP REPORTS

- Macleod** – The Summer clothes are now in and all the winter clothes went to Diabetes Australia.
- Watsonia** – A Break up BBQ tea is to be held at Beth Jones'. Don will write a letter from the Priest in Charge to all the Op. Shop workers expressing appreciation of their work.

PARISH FÊTE/FAIR COMMITTEE REPORT

Yes – there will be another Spring Fair at St. Andrew's – 6th November 2010. To everyone involved this year, thanks! We are growing together as a great team and we can do the impossible through Him who strengthens us and to Him we give the glory.

MAINLY MUSIC PROGRAM

This is coming to an end with a Christmas special at each centre next week.

PLAYGROUP REPORT

All is going well. The Service and party will be held on 8th December.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- Probus are complaining that it is too hot in the St Andrew's Fellowship Hall for an attendance of 90.
It was decided to erect a shed at the back of the hall with a doorway through for the storage of the 'junk' which will give more space in the hall.
- Locksmith confirmed the present locks on the upper hall at Heidelberg are illegal. A correct lock will cost \$290 and Philip volunteered to install it (to save >\$500).
- The Incumbency Committee will meet with Bishop Barbara, the Archdeacon, a Counsellor and a Lay Facilitator on Tuesday 24th at 5pm at Heidelberg.

NB. IF YOU FEEL YOU WOULD LIKE CLARIFICATION ON ANY OF THE ABOVE POINTS, VESTRY MEMBERS AND WARDENS ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO HELP.

Rosemary Bellair

Anglican Men's Society

St Andrew's Anglican Men's meeting took place in our Fellowship Hall a few minutes after 8 pm, led by our Treasurer, Geoff Murphy. I'm afraid we were down in numbers, and a number of apologies were received.

Geoff conducted the meeting very well, reading from the Letter to the Hebrews 10: 14, 19–25, assuring us to be confident by the blood of Jesus through faith, being hopeful and loving one another, doing good deeds, always encouraging each another to remain firm in our faith and love of Jesus. After a formal short time in prayer, it was time to listen to Geoff on his trip to America, setting foot in New York, illustrated with slides. It was very entertaining.

The Americans are very proud of their historic city and its everyday culture. For each person that lost his life the day the towers fell, a flag was placed in his honour on an adjoining block of land: a time to remember for ever. Then we had a hop around to other parts of the country. Niagara Falls was worth seeing, although on a cold and stormy day you need to be well wrapped up. Otherwise one would be wet by the spray.

Crossing into Canada was very special. Many fine buildings could be found and the people were most friendly.

The Americans love to hold onto their historical roots.

With appreciation we thank Geoff for his time and patience in bringing the tour to our meeting. During the past year we have made an effort to bring to you various speakers, and further intend to do so next year.

We are sorry to have to say farewell to the Rev'd Donald Bellamy. For his services in helping us out, we wish him God's blessings in his new parish, and that you will all pray for him that he will continue to be a good disciple of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Christmas is almost here. We wish you a very merry Christmas and a good New Year among your families. Many thanks to Lynne for doing notices, and also to our editor Peter McKay.

The Lord be with you all,
Lay Chairman Albert Harvey

Afterword

The editor would like to express his appreciation of Donald Bellamy's guidance for over ten years, from the Parish of Yallambie onwards. His preaching has been brilliant—but it has had the more strength for me because I knew it came from a man who struggled. No glib happy-clappiness: where there was joy, it was serious and considered joy.

I shall miss him. I shall also miss being able to talk about W-class trams!
— Peter McKay