

# BANYULE BABBLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF BANYULE  
ST JOHN'S HEIDELBERG ❄️ HOLY SPIRIT WATSONIA

DECEMBER  
2023

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## DENISE'S DATELINE

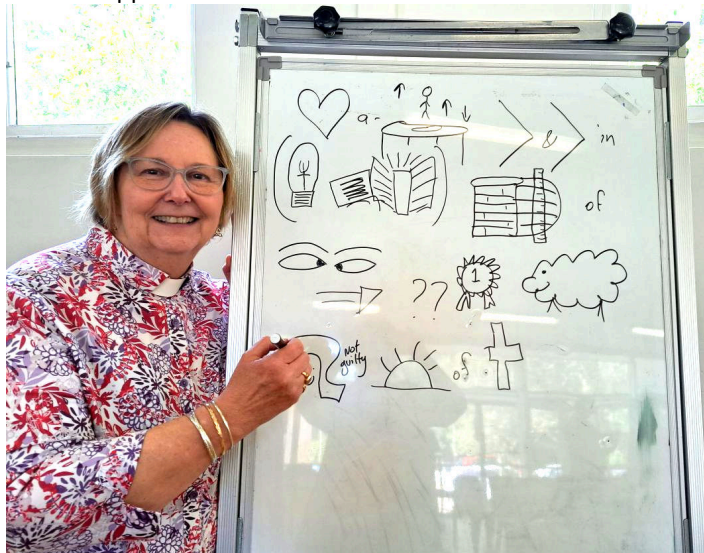
**T**HE Annual Parish Meeting has come and gone, and we have a new Parish Council for 2023/2024. I want to pay tribute to all those who have served us so ably in the past 12 months, as we have moved through a number of significant changes across our Parish. Our PC met each month, and the level of collegiality in our common purpose was evident as we worked together for the good of our parish. I note that Andrew Fegan, Mike Connor, Emmi Godau and Rosemary Bellair have stepped down, and thank them for their commitment and diligent service. Remaining on PC are Rhonda Taylor, Kaye Collins and Katrina Philip, who have been re-elected for a further year, to be joined by new PC members Glenn Ambrose (Treasurer) and Mercy Henry.

As I thought and prayed about the APM and what to speak on from God's word in our service of worship that day, I feel that God led me to Philippians 1:1-11, and especially to Paul's prayer for them (verses 9-11):

*'...that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,<sup>10</sup> so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,<sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.'* (Philippians 1:9-11)

It struck me that this prayer is so different from how I find myself praying – yes, we know that God delights to hear **all** our prayers – but the focus of this prayer struck me afresh when I was seeking to evaluate our past year. So, with whiteboard at the ready, and a marker in my hand, I sought to engage our congregation in a game of what I like to call 'Bible Pictionary', otherwise known as 'our Vicar is a terrible illustrator, what IS she talking about?'

I wonder, can you make out from the picture below the verse Philippians 1:10?



To the shouts of 'don't give up your day job, Vicar!', I tried to encourage us to commit to heart and mind this great prayer about abounding in love, increasing in knowledge and insight about God's love – trusting NOT in ourselves, but having

**News of Mavis:** Mavis is OK, but will be at her daughter's for a bit. She is embarrassed to be using a wheely-walker. Her eyesight has got worse.

confidence in the One who began a good work in us and will carry it onto completion. (Philippians 1:6).

As I have prayed and sought God's leading in the last few months, I have come to feel that we need to look at the reality of the 'season' we are in: this is not yet for us a season of harvest, but of consolidation, preparation, of feeding and nourishing, and of waiting.

Our hopes and plans of starting a new morning service at Watsonia are good – but the time is not yet right.

In year 8 mediaeval history I learned about the three-fields farming technique that led to increased yield in time but allowed part of the cropping land a time for rest and rejuvenation. I wonder if this might be the season we at Banyule are in? A season not of reaping, or even planting – but a season of **NOURISHMENT** in the Lord Jesus Christ. The fallow land was not ignored and left to wither, but fed and nourished so that it could be even more fruitful in the future.

I think that we as a Church need to keep nourishing our hearts and minds with our prayers and with God's Word – these are what will deepen and strengthen our roots. It is God who began that 'good work' of faith in Jesus within each of us – and we can be confident that God will bring us to full completion in Christ.

Will you please use this prayer for yourself and for us as God's Church in our areas?

*Lord God, we pray that our love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that we may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.'* Amen.

Denise



## Christmas and beyond!

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Sunday December 17 | 9.30 am St John's: Lessons & Carols  |
| Sunday December 24 | 9.30 am Holy Spirit: All-age carols<br>5 pm St John's: Children's carols on lawn<br>9 pm St John's |
| Monday December 25 | 9.30 am Holy Spirit<br>9.30 am St John's   |
| Sunday December 31 | 9.30 am Holy Spirit: Jonathan's farewell   |
| Sunday January 7   | 9.30 am St John's  |
| Sunday January 14  | 9.30 am Holy Spirit  |
| Sunday January 21  | 9.30 am St John's  |
| Sunday January 28  | 9.30 am Holy Spirit  |
| Sunday February 4  | 9.30 am St John's: Commissioning   |



## This Month – December

**Sunday 3rd Advent 1:** 9.30 am St John's (all-age service), 5 pm Holy Spirit

*Isaiah 64:1–9; Mark 13:24–37*

**Wednesday 6th:** 11 am Iris Grange; 3.30 pm Strathalan

**Sunday 10th Advent 2:** 9.30 am St John's, 5 pm Holy Spirit

*Isaiah 40:1–11; Mark 1:1–8*

**Tuesday 12th:** 5.10 pm Denise installed at St Paul's

**Sunday 17th Advent 3:** 9.30 am Combined at St John's

*Lessons and Carols*

**Sunday 24th Advent 4, Christmas Eve:** 9.30 am Combined at **Holy Spirit** (all-age carol service); 5 pm Children's Carols at St John's; 9 pm at St John's

*9 pm: Isaiah 52:7–10; John 1:1–14*

**Monday 25th Christmas Day:** 9.30 am at Holy Spirit; 9.30 am at St John's

*9 pm: Isaiah 52:7–10; John 1:1–14*

**Sunday 31st Christmas 1:** 9.30 am Combined at Holy Spirit: Jonathan's last day with us

## Wanted

- Another churchwarden
- More *mainly music* volunteers
- Musicians

## Money: September

Income: Giving: \$8,693.16  
 Other: \$17,375.96  
 Total: \$26,069.12

Expenses: \$52,218.89

**Deficit: \$26,149.77**

Giving was down slightly. Two large payments: \$14,360 on further preparatory work for the restoration of St John's church building; \$6,000 on transferring the St Andrew's Memorial Garden to St John's—should be recoverable from the monies raised by the sale of the Rosanna property.

## Holy Spirit Mothers' Union

Our MU meeting was held in our church on Wednesday 25th October 2023, at 10 am. After Cuppa & Chat, Val led us in the MU Service, singing Covenant Songs 138, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*. Elsie gave a report on the MU Council meeting at St Paul's Cathedral. Another interesting and well attended meeting.

We decided to fill two Dignity Bags: many thanks, Val, for doing the shopping.

The Annual Meeting report was read out, all agreed, then we finished our meeting with Midday Prayers: for our Link Branch St Mary's Broughty Ferry Scotland, the Karen Nursery School. and the Defence Anglican Chaplaincy.

Our next meeting will be on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, and after our meeting we will have lunch at Watsonia RSL.

*Elsie Storr*

## mainly music: December 2023

What a terrific year we have had! Bringing back the Lycra and the bean bags was a great success. The number of families has remained high and attendance has been good. We are also thankful that each member of the team has remained well and able to attend most weeks. However, we are all looking forward to a break over the holidays before committing again in February.

Please pray that we might each experience renewal of body and spirit so we can continue next year. We know there are more families out there just waiting for a chance to come and hear the Good News.

*Rosemary Bellair  
 (0428 595 394)*

**Right:** *mainly music* teddies – ready for Advent!

*[Ed: With candles in their heads!]*



Canons get their own stalls in the Cathedral, named after notable saints.

**Left:** Denise tries out her stall, named after St Alban, the first British martyr. St Alban sheltered a Christian priest during a time of persecution, and offered himself in the priest's place. He is said to have miraculously dried up a river so he could get to the place of execution sooner.

**Right:** Beth Senn, Patrick's wife, has also been made a canon, and has been given a stall named after St Peter, whom of course we know well.





# Blokes Helping Blokes



*Blokes Helping Blokes* met on Saturday 4th November at its new secret location of the Party Room at the Heidelberg McDonald's on Bell Street. Not only was this free to hire, but there was also a door to a special playground for the Blokes, of which, however, they were too shy to take advantage.

Some of the blokes were indeed not in tip-top condition. Glen arrived with a finger bandaged, because of the harvesting of his wheat. Instead of using a combine harvester like any normal farmer, he had employed a man with a scythe—well, actually, a very sharp sickle—who had mistaken Glen's fingers for particularly fat ears of wheat. Glen showed his manliness by describing in detail how the sickle had opened his finger to the bone, and offered to show the Blokes pictures, which they declined.

Allan was not having Glen being top dog in the Gore Stakes, and he spoke at length about his bloody nose, which had baffled the medical profession with the volume and persistence of its bleeding. He described in detail how pinching his nose to stop the exsanguination had merely caused the blood to pool above the pinch and pour down the back of his throat, whence he hawked it up into a large bowl in front of him. He also spoke with pleasure of how his nose (with him attached) was rushed by ambulance to the Alfred, exceeding the speed limit on the wrong side of the road and going through several red lights, something Allan always wished to do but rarely did, at least when sober.

Allan told us that they shoved a camera up his nose and when the bloke under the black cloth had developed the plate, it was found that no fewer than five blood vessels (he said it with pride) had ruptured, and he was cauterised with silver nitrate, which the Editor happens to know is called 'lunar caustic', and will not draw any conclusions. The Blokes also declined to view Allan's pictures.

With such light and pleasant chitchat did the Blokes work up an appetite for their morning tea.

The main topic of conversation was Great Sporting Moments of the Blokes' past. Neil spoke of how he used to turn up every Saturday afternoon in footy season to watch North Melbourne get trounced, but he had also had the pleasure of seeing that team win the Grand Final in 1975. Neil was asked about Ron Barassi, whom he knew well: he said he was a man of two halves, kind and helpful in private life, and ruthless and uncompromising in football.

Robert spoke of his love for sport. In his experience, conversations between batsmen waiting on the bench was the best life could offer. Although his first love was cricket, he

also had recently had the pleasure of having a football cup named after him.

David Woods had brought along his own trophy that he was given for taking a hat-trick. It was under especially unusual circumstances, as he took a week to complete it. But they still gave it to him, even though he was so slow about it, and he passed the thing around as proof. At this David Fitzgerald got out his Brownlow equivalent and passed it around ahead of David Woods' trophy, while telling us how he had got it by continuing to play football while injured so badly he should have been stretchered off and sent in an ambulance to a crack team of surgeons. He did not compare this feat to Glenn Maxwell's double century against Afghanistan while suffering a bad back and severe cramps, because

that incident was still three days in the future and had not yet happened.

Jim talked about his hockey glory days. The Editor also, though his glory in sport was of a singularly muted character. On his school's ranking of tennis players in the whole school he was at the very top, but only if one looked at it upside-down. In winter he too played hockey, on the right wing, and his team became adept at using the left wing—not adept enough, however. On one occasion when half the team had flu, some officials decided that instead of phoning in a walkover, they would make the Editor captain, thereby laying all the blame on him. The Editor found some footballers who had never played hockey in their lives, but were prepared to give it a go with zero training. The result was a draw, far and away the best result the team had ever had.

Glen talked about how Open House had involved disabled people in sporting activities, such as surfing. Attitudes had changed: in the early days they would be told off for bringing these people into ordinary people's line of sight. On the other hand David Woods pointed out that they couldn't do now the things they used to do, because the risk assessment paperwork would be too much, and insurers wouldn't touch it.

Thinking of his greatest sporting moment, Keith referred to an entry in his diary for 24th September 1949, when, in a crowd of 90,453, he saw Essendon 18.17.125 overwhelm Carlton 6.16.52 in the Grand Final. Even though we later learnt that Keith had got the scores and attendance figures from the Net, it was still astonishing to find out that Keith has in fact kept a diary since 1st January 1943, and therefore has recorded, and retained, so far nearly 81 years. Samuel Pepys' diary only covers ten years!

Glen had earlier attempted to give the Editor a means to show glory by broadening the word 'sport' to include endeavours of the mind, but it was of no use, as the Editor had no glory in that area either. However in the last minute he realised that his former students might constitute some form of achievement. Unfortunately, of the thousands of former students, he could think of no names that reflected any radiance, save one. Therefore he informed the Blokes with pride that he had helped teach First-Year Chemistry to Rob Sitch of *Utopia*.

The next *Blokes Helping Blokes* will be on 2nd December, again at the Heidelberg McDonald's, 120 Bell St Heidelberg (or enter from Francis St), 8.45–10.30 am. All blokes are welcome! Enquiries: Glen 0487 852 808.

# The Annual Parish Meeting

19th November 2023

The APM took place this year under somewhat unusual circumstances, because church was in the hall, due to bits of a church tower pinnacle falling off and the fear that Satan, who is known to make use of temple pinnacles for evil purposes (see Matthew 4:5/Luke 4:9), might take the opportunity to take pot-shots at members of the congregation. Since church was in the hall, the service, morning tea and the APM all occurred seamlessly in the same place, and it was more difficult for people to scurry off without being noticed.

The Editor, who had been asked beforehand to be Minute Secretary, thought he saw a way to take advantage of the situation. Denise had prepared a small table with two chairs, but the Editor thought that if he pulled the tea table next to it, not only could he give more room to his writing elbow and not have to be in such awkwardly intimate propinquity to the Vicar, but he could also help himself to what was left of morning tea slices and biscuits (quite a lot) whenever he felt he needed refreshing. Alas, one of the ladies helping with morning tea came and took all the trays away and left the table bare of all sustenance. The Editor briefly toyed with the idea of reaching out a hand to recover a tray, but was afraid he would receive a sharp slap on it.

The meeting started with the Editor urging the assembly in a loud voice to write their attendance on the sheet passing around. So compelling was the power of his persuasion that the smallest proportion ever actually did it. Perhaps they were afraid they would be sent a bill, but it was awkward for the minutes when motions were proposed and seconded by people who were not officially present.

Denise hurriedly took charge and said the meeting had begun, and pointed out that a notice officially saying there was a meeting had been plastered all over the parish and the internet. This was helpful for people who were not aware they were at a meeting and instead thought they were getting their teeth fixed, or a new set of tyres.

Denise now said that the Editor should be officially appointed Minute Secretary, and two people took the opportunity to pay back the Editor for rude things he had said, by moving and seconding the motion. There was a little, a very little, desultory applause, which the Editor recorded as 'passed by acclamation'.

The minutes were rapidly dealt with; also the electoral roll. Denise pointed out that we had lost a couple of people to another earthly parish and several more to a heavenly parish, where presumably bits of pinnacles do not fall off. We have however one or two additions, who are always very much appreciated.

Next came the Vicar's Report. Rosemary Bellair, she said, was leaving wardenhood. The substantial applause that followed this announcement was, we must assume, recognising Rosemary's very considerable contribution to wardenly duties. Similarly, when Denise announced that Mike Connor and Andrew Fegan were stepping down from Parish Council and there was wild applause, I'm sure it must have been in appreciation of those blokes' work there.

Denise then again referred to her clerical colleagues—Jonathan, Sarah and Helen—as 'partners in crime'. She has done this before, and the Editor always wonders what crime they are partnering in. Knowing Denise's largely unrequited interest in very expensive jewellery, it would not be surprising if she were involved in planning some fabulous heist. If the British Crown Jewels go missing, the Editor will know who was dangling from the Tower of London ceiling, dressed in clerical black.

Next came the parochial attendance statistics. This is a very important part of the Vicar's report, traditionally espe-

cially pointed to in its title, and sternly enjoined by the Archbishop *ex cathedra*. No Vicar would dare to omit it.

Denise forgot.

Denise commended the St Andrew's people for their godliness in the face of grief, an emotion she has had to face herself multiple times in the last year. The St Andrew's tapestry is now on the wall in the St John's office, the stained glass window that was originally from St Philip's is now in the door of the children's room, the memorial book is in St John's, the Pascal candlestick is being used, as are some Communion linen and things. Other stuff has been gifted to a new Dinka (an ethnic group from South Sudan) congregation that had nothing, or to other congregations that can give them a good home.\* Some things will go to Lowther Hall, the Anglican girls' school.

Denise is disappointed that plans for a new service at Watsonia have fallen in a heap, and blames herself. She wants Watsonia to stand on its own feet, but just wanting isn't enough. Helen said our prayers have not been wasted. God will grow his Church as he pleases.

The op shop management by the Brotherhood is working well, and Mark Lane has been replaced by someone who makes sure we are paid promptly, which greatly pleases the Editor.

Denise is happy to still be with the parish. She had feared that she would have to leave the parish to look after her parents, but her father is coping well, and her mother now lacks nothing. She is grateful to the parish for its support in a difficult year, and she said she would be earnestly praying the prayer she had already expounded (see page 1).

Parish Council had nothing to say, and the wardens had already published their report, but there was comment on how the wardens had a difficult task, and few people saw all the work they did. This year, as well as keeping everything running as it always had (but wouldn't without the wardens), they had to produce tons of documents to try to persuade the Diocese to give us back some of the money from the sale of our properties.

Emmi now addressed the financial side. It was a challenging year, but she and we had managed to keep our heads above water. Considering our size, parishioners had been generous in their giving. We spend a lot of money on clergy, but we have to. Next year we can only afford 1½ clergy, and the half is hard to find, so if you see half a vicar anywhere, you are to bag him or her up and bring him or her to Denise.

Emmi has to stand down, not for the usual reason Treasurers have to stand down, but because the Diocese's rules insist no-one can hold office for more than six years in succession. Emmi said she would be sad not to have to spend many hours each week bookkeeping, but she would still turn up at church and perhaps occasionally count the collection using several different systems, just to keep her hand in.

There was discussion, here and later, of the land sales. The Watsonia car park had sold for about \$770,000, and we got \$473,294.99, about 60% of it, which Emmi described as a 'huge win'. Allan Way hoped we got the same from St Andrew's, but that is still very much in the air, despite all the efforts of the wardens. Also the \$473,294.99 is not ours to use as we like, but is held close-fistedly by the Diocese and we can only spend it on buildings and even so have to persuade them that it would be a good idea. We have asked and asked to use it to pay off our interest-costing loans, but so far without success. Even such an obvious thing as repair of St John's has been passed on from one bureaucrat to another in the Diocese, until it went full circle and was passed on to the official who first passed it on.

\* The Dinka congregation will get the famous bar fridge, called for by Mavis L\*\*\*.



The sale of St Andrew's includes the vicarage, because without it the land would be an awkward shape. That has consequences for our budget, because we shall no longer get the income from the Watsonia car park rental, and no longer get the income from the Rosanna vicarage rental. Nevertheless we are aiming for a balanced budget.

The meeting approved the accounts and the budget and especially approved of Emmi's work, and she was given a floral tribute:



The reports of groups passed without comment, except that it was good we still had them. We then did some electing, or would have done if the number of nominations had ever exceeded the number of vacancies, which they didn't. So our churchwardens are now **Katrina Philip** and **Kaye Collins**, and there could be another one if anyone's body is not sufficiently well greased. Denise said she had wanted to appoint Robin Miller, but unfortunately he had shown up and used his death-stare.

Parish Council will include, as well as the Vicar and wardens, old hand **Rhonda Taylor** and new hands **Mercy Henry** and **Glenn Ambrose**. Glenn is only a new addition to the Parish Roll, but that didn't stop Denise from getting him into a front chinlock and neck wrench, a crossface chickenwing, an over-rotated Delfin clutch, an Argentine backbreaker rack, a calf crusher, and a Tongan death grip, until he agreed to be our new Treasurer. 'Thank you, Lord!' said Joan Way.

For the Incumbency Committee, the long-experienced Allan Way and Judy Thomson had their hands held up. In the increasingly-possible situation that they are needed, a warden will be lassoed in as well.

Our present auditors were rewarded for finding no problems by being appointed again. Denise also waved about a list of Approved Lay Assistants at Communion. Apparently the arrangement is that the list is sent to the bishop, but you don't have to wait for the bishop to say yes. Presumably at some time in the future, when he/she has nothing better to do, the bishop goes checking through the lists of unfamiliar names for suitability ('Santa Firucle Zeebubble? Was that the old codger with the shaking hands?'), but probably by then all the people on the list have died.

It was time for Any Other Business. Joan Way wanted to know if Heritage Victoria gave any assistance for maintenance of historic buildings. Katrina avoided snorting, and said there were grants that could be applied for, but not at present. The grants had to be matched at least one-to-one with our money.

There were questions about the timeline for moving the two Memorial Gardens, one of which is now a Memorial Mound. Apparently Heritage Victoria consider this a matter on which they make the decisions, at times suitable to themselves. They won't start the process until we have the money, and then the decision is so momentous it will take them a year.

Since it would take so long, Robin wondered, could they put the St Andrew's garden into a Memorial Container? The answer was that it would cost too much, but the Memorial Mound did have plastic sheeting below it as well as on top. Even putting up Memorial Screens was too expensive.

The St John's Garden has to be moved, because it is impacting on the foundations. It is possible to get exemptions from the usual rule of Memorial Gardens being attached to the church building.

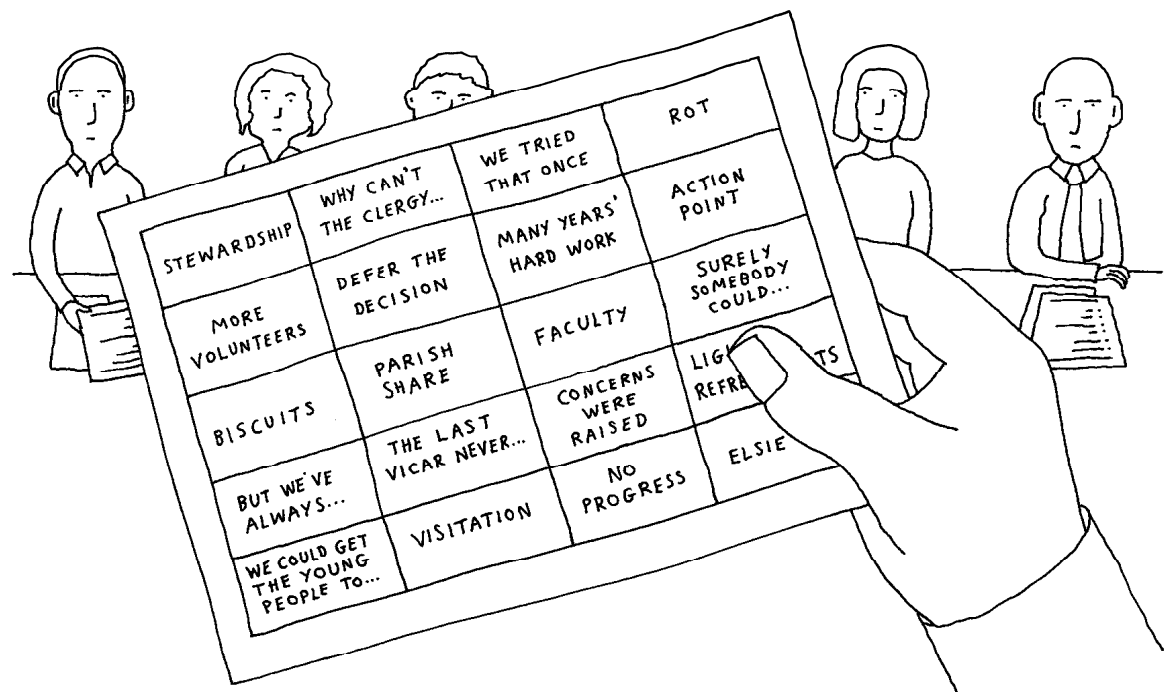
Kaye Collins suggested we should have a retiring collection for Missions on each fifth Sunday in the month, and Denise thought that was an excellent idea.

Katrina Philip thanked Denise for a lovely year, warm-hearted and uplifting, and there was much applause. Since Katrina has been a warden during this time, dealing with the Diocese, the Editor can only take his hat off to her.

At that, we disbanded on the stroke of noon.

## P.C.C. BINGO

WORDS AND PHRASES OFTEN USED DURING MEETINGS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL



## Memories of St Andrew's

As told by Joyce Quinn, with assistance from her children Beth and Michael, to the Editor, who is responsible for all errors



Joyce is now 100 years old, but her memories are still sharp. With Beth and Michael, she spoke to the Editor on Wednesday 15th November in her long-time home, while plying him with tea and a marvellous fruit-cake.

Joyce had grown up in the Northcote/Thornbury area, and met her husband, who was in the army, during the war. He came from South Australia and was sent back there. They were married in South Australia and lived there for some years, before returning to Victoria in 1953. Rosanna was just opening up.

Rosanna then was all paddocks, with no made roads, and no sewerage: this function was served by the old 'dunny cart'. The milkman also came by horse and cart, and the baker also came around. Everyone in the area was building with War Service Loans, and there were fifty children in the very short street.

Joyce worked as a nurse, mainly part-time, and especially later as the night nurse on the TB children's ward. There was at the time a very determined effort to eradicate tuberculosis, and any child who gave a positive test, even without symptoms, would be put in hospital for observation for weeks. These children were not feeling at all sick and they used to be cheeky and give nurses trouble, so they wanted someone with experience who could apply a firm hand.

In 1953, Joyce started in the little old church. The Parish Hall was there, but not the new church or Fellowship Hall. Joyce remembers Mr [Phil] Cooke [vicar 1957–1960, but had been curate earlier], but he didn't stay long, and went to the Austin Hospital. Then it was Mr [Eric] Constable [vicar 1961–1973]. Joyce said, 'None of us were holy enough for Mr Constable'. The church would be overflowing, but the children were 'bored witless' by Mr Constable's sermon, and couldn't wait for Sunday School.

Sunday School was huge. Mr [Eric] Carter would start on the stage in the Parish Hall, and then they were broken up into classes, which were taught by the older kids. There would be Bible stories and play acting. And there was the annual Sunday School picnic at Aspendale by special chartered train.

The train was a 'red rattler', but Joyce was careful to point out that it was not the normal seven carriages that others have averred, but only four. The children were packed in, sitting on each other's knees. Many people helped with the picnic, but Mrs [Bettie] Mitchell and Mr [Ted] Colvin were the guiding lights, and great organisers.

(Mr Colvin held all the keys to St Andrew's at his house, and everyone who needed to get in had to sign out a key from him, and return it promptly.)

A furniture van with seats down the middle used to pick up children for Sunday School. Sunday School was very important as a way to meet children in other schools—there were Scouts and Guides, but they were booked out. Rosanna was divided by the railway line, with brick houses on the west

side and weatherboard on the east, and they were on the weatherboard side. There wasn't much east of the line until Rosanna Golf Links Primary School opened.

The children's groups CEBS (for the boys) and GFS (for the girls) were very popular, and Joyce's husband took over leadership of the CEBS group.

GFS ['Girls' Friendly Society'] was run by Bettie Mitchell and Barbara Mitchell [now Mollard]. There were crafts, colouring-in, painting, and camps at Frankston.

CEBS ['Church of England Boys' Society'] was similar to Scouts, but they used to go to the Surf Lifesaving Club at Aspendale, where there would be a long table with chairs down the middle of a very long room, with endless sandwiches, then cakes and slices and shortbread.

The point was that it was the parents who did all the work setting things up. The kids would go to the beach, and the parents cleaned up. Again Bettie Mitchell is mentioned, and Connie Goode.

There were school fêtes and church fêtes, but St Andrew's was the topper. Joyce ran her renowned cake stall, and people would be waiting before opening time, just for the sponges. Mothers' Union had a craft stall, and Mrs Constable supplied many of the goods—she was 'forever making things', said Joyce.

Joyce was Secretary of the Ladies' Guild, and her husband was a vestryman. As well as Eric Carter's Sunday School there was a 'pack-away' kindergarten run by Mrs Mitchell, using the cupboards that ran all along under the windows in the Parish Hall. Mr Colvan made wooden toys that were stored in the cupboards, and milk and fruit were given to the children in the small hall behind the stage.

Beth's first job was helping in the kindergarten.

As well there were tap-dancing and ballet classes, and an Annual Concert. There was a youth group, and the Lintons hosted them in his own home.

Church was for many a social thing, and Joyce pointed to a poem that listed a lot of reasons people came to church, ending with

*Some go there to doze and nod,  
But very few to worship God.*

However Mr Constable made sure he was on every committee and in a position to exert control. He was not much liked—Joyce thought everyone felt under his censure. He was strongly in favour of missionary work—and became one himself later—and when the youth group raised funds for something they wanted, he gave the money to missions.

He would not allow the youth group to play Peter, Paul and Mary; and there was to be no ballroom dancing in his parish. For that, the children had to go to St John's, where they ran it, but carefully: parents had to bring their children to the door, the doors were locked during the evening, and then the children released into the hands of their parents.

The Constable family had a lot of tragedy: Claire Constable was knocked down and killed by a hit-and-run driver while visiting her husband at the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital (the sunrise window is in memory of her); a son was killed in a plane crash; [and Eric Constable himself was knifed to death by Islamist terrorists in the vicarage of All Saints' Jakarta in 1974\*].

There were many, many others. Mrs Olive Mellor, who laid out the grounds and chose the plantings when the new church was built, Joyce described as a 'gentle lady'. Ian Buckmaster was remembered, and especially for his Harvest Festivals. Joyce described Mr Cameron, [vicar 1979–2002] as 'very nice'. We could have talked much longer!

\* See <https://www.etermitynews.com.au/world/the-murder-in-the-vicarage-of-jakartas-oldest-church/>



## Lorna Audrey Holliday

3 August 1931 – 13 November 2023



Lorna's funeral was held at St John's on Thursday 23rd November. Because of fear of falling masonry after a piece of finial was found to have fallen earlier in the month, attendees had to enter through the chapel. And because we have lost Syd, the organ was played by Dr Greg Lockrey.

After some prayers, we sang *The Lord's my Shepherd*, and then Lorna's daughters Vanessa and Kim gave eulogies. Vanessa said:

I'd just like to thank you all for being here today to celebrate our mother, Lorna.

To me, she was just extraordinary and I was always so proud of her and proud to be her daughter.

She was strong, courageous, determined, funny, and fiercely loving and loyal to her family and friends. She had a smile that could light up a room and I am going to miss that more than anything.

Mum is the most determined person I have ever met. She attacked every challenge big or small, and didn't give up. Ever.

And she took on many challenges.

When many other mothers of the day were at home, Lorna was working full time while managing to feed, clothe and send two kids off to school, take care of her elderly (and somewhat unpredictable) grandmother, our Nan, and still have dinner on the table by the time Dad came home every day.

Mind you, she didn't do it all alone. Lorna was not a fool. As soon as she judged us able, Kim and I were assigned food preparation tasks, and heaven help us if we messed up.

When Dad passed away nearly 30 years ago, her heart was broken, but she never gave up on life, not for a minute. They had so many plans for retirement and travel, but she told me she had a lot of years ahead and she was going to make the best of it and find things to do.

She threw herself into so many activities and built a rich and full life, making many wonderful friends, many of you here today.

She played scrabble at Scrabble Club, wrote speeches and funny poems for the Penguins Club leaving her audience in stitches,

she wrote murder mystery novels (she never published them, happy to exchange chapters with her friends at the Writers Club every month), and of course she was into everything at the Ladies Fellowship here at St John's.

In her 'down time' she also found time to drive from Rosanna to Yarrville once or twice a week to look after her grandchildren Rory and Kobe when they were little. This she loved more than anything.

And of course she travelled. Everywhere. From Machu Picchu to the Canadian Rockies, the pyramids of Egypt, South Africa, Europe and Vietnam. She covered every continent.

It was an extraordinary achievement to rebuild her life like that, and I was so proud of her.

Her determined streak sometimes overtook logic. Like the time when I was quite young when she decided she would start lying about her age. Until I was about 7 or 8 she instigated a strategy of insisting she was 21. For about 8 years. When the kids at school tried to disabuse me of this bare-faced lie she simply said 'No. Maths doesn't work that way.' How then did it work? She refused to elaborate. She would not concede or reveal her actual age.

Eventually we did figure it out in time to hold an 80th birthday party up at the Old England. Reluctantly she agreed, and although she had a wonderful time, she later told me she wished she'd never agreed because 'now everyone knows and treats me like I'm old!'

Her enthusiasm for gardening knew no bounds. Our lack of interest in joining her for a session of weeding would make her furious. Why would anyone want to go to the beach instead? The gardening obsession even got her in hot water with Dad sometimes, and the mild-mannered Cliff would threaten to prune her roses with the mower. She would just glare at him like 'try me'. We all knew who would win that fight.

The neighbours at Lorne told me that even into her 80's she used to mulch branches all day (it's loud and can't have been fun for them!) and climb up the ladder to clean the gutters – it's a two-storey house.

She was unstoppable.

Even today, falling masonry and Heritage Victoria have proved no match for Lorna. Despite the obstacles (physical ones too) here we are at St John's for her funeral, exactly as she wanted it. 'What, that little bit of rock!' she would have said. 'Bloody fuss over nothing'.

More than anything Mum loved her family and friends. She kept us all in line and up to her high standards – all for our own good – but when it mattered she would do anything for us and we knew it.

She was not just good at making friends, she was good at keeping them. Pat, her best friend since they started school together at Echuca High; Lorraine, who worked with Mum and became a life long friend; and of course Pauline, Joyce, Margaret and the rest of the community here at St John's.

At this point Mum would have told me to 'stop carrying on'. She left a copy of the poem 'Death is nothing at all' for Kim and me, which is printed on the back of the Order of Service, to let us know that she doesn't want us to let grief overshadow the funny, happy, loving memories we have of her.

Also, I think she wants me to know she is still watching – and there will be no mercy if I mention her age in this speech.

Thank you, Mum. For everything.

Kim said:

Where to start to talk about Mum? There are so many things to say, it's hard to know where to begin. She was a force of nature. Determined, motivated... she put the 's' in strategic. But also beautiful, kind, funny, super smart. Mum knew what she wanted out of life and she wasted no time wondering. She went out and did things. Obstacles? They didn't stand a chance.

Mum grew up in Tongala, in northern Victoria, and moved to Melbourne after completing her Leaving Certificate. She told me once that at that time a girl had three career options. You could be a nurse, a teacher or a secretary. She chose the latter, went to secretarial school, and became a bookkeeper working for the Commonwealth Bank.

She met and married Cliff, and they were the perfect couple. Incredibly aligned in what they wanted and up for any challenge to make their dreams happen. And that they did. It was often Dad who had the vision, and Mum who laid in plans, found the money (she was, after all, a bookkeeper) and made it happen. They built their beautiful house in Rosanna, and then, in the mid-70's, Dad came up with a plan to build a holiday house at Lorne, where his family had been from. This wasn't what your average suburban couple did in those days. It was expensive, and took a lot of planning and a lot of faith and a lot of hard work to make it happen. Dad (an engineer) designed it and drafted the plans and they built it to lock-up stage and finished it off themselves. The staircase was a ladder sticking through a hole in the floor for a year or two, and the internal walls had no lining, but that didn't matter. They had built the dream. And they enjoyed that dream for decades to come as the house was finished.

Which puts me in mind of another, very important, side of Mum. If something was to be done, it had to be done properly, and it had to be done elegantly. The house at Lorne wasn't finished in her mind until she had decorated it suitably. No rough and tumble beach shack for her! Dad put in a flat-pack kitchen in perfect mid-70's brown and green style, and Mum installed her grandmother's traditional dining table and period chairs, and then carpeted the whole house in the highest quality white woollen carpet. We tiptoed around that carpet for many decades because God help us if anything got spilt on it! We kept hoping it would eventually wear out and we could get it replaced in a more sensible colour, but Mum did things properly and it didn't. It's still there!

Mum and Dad were an incredible couple. They were always in step, always had vision, always looking to do something just a little bit different. I remember one day, some time in the late 60s I think, Dad came home and said to Mum 'I think this computer thing is going to be big. I think I'll get into computers.' This was way before computers were any kind of thing in most people's lives. She supported him going back to night school at RMIT to further his qualifications – where he ended up graduating and then returning to teach Numerical Analysis. They were a formidable team, and it was one of the great tragedies of Mum's life and all of our lives to have lost him at age 61.

Mum was ahead of the curve in many ways when we were young. She was one of the first women in our street to go 'back to



work'. She worked as a Credit Controller at Spicers paper and then at Blackwoods as it became. Her job was to set the terms of credit for customers and to prise payment out of recalcitrant ones. And she was bloody good at it. I got to work with her a few summer holidays when I was at Uni and I got to observe her in action. I remember her speaking to a customer on the phone who was clearly very behind in their payments. She was so beautiful, gently putting in place a plan for payment in instalments. When the conversation was finished, she slammed the phone down and exclaimed 'God almighty'! Apparently, this kind of thing happened often, sometimes followed by battle cries of 'Seven Days'! or even, 'Cash On Delivery'!! She was super smart, but always strategic. A force of nature.

Some of the themes of Mum's life, as I witnessed it:

**Quality.** If something was worth doing, it was worth doing well. And with style. She was determined that Vanessa and I would have good educations and go to University, so she worked to make that happen. That meant we also had to always do our best, no matter what, and that was one of the great lessons she taught us. If you want to do something, you put your best foot forward and do it.

**Intelligence.** Mum was super smart. She was a brilliant writer, penning hysterically funny and beautifully crafted stories about her family and life on the farm, as well as more recent events. She was a killer Scrabble player, playing for many years with the Greensborough club, and became a fabulous speech writer through her membership of the Penguins club.

**Beauty.** Part of doing things properly was presenting oneself to the best advantage. She was incredibly beautiful, and she had exquisite taste in everything, whether it was clothes, make-up, or furnishings. In the early days she made her own outfits (and ours). Later she became a regular fixture at the boutiques of Ivanhoe. To the end, we couldn't go to Ivanhoe without a quick stop into Fella Hamilton for the latest, or to Claudia Louise, where she would stock up on the most beautiful clothes for the season. I remember her chastising me when I was in my first job as an optometrist and I needed work clothes. 'Don't buy that rubbish', she said. She took me to David Jones and made me buy a Fletcher Jones skirt and matching tops and jumper. I'd never spent so much money on a garment in my life. (I think it was \$200!) She said, 'Trust me, these will last and they will look good'. She was right.

Being well presented wasn't about vanity

for Mum, or pride. It was about respect. About putting your best foot forward and always doing your best. She tried her best to teach Vanessa and me that. She'd look at us and say 'Oh, you're wearing that, are you?' and we'd know we had to lift our game.

**Kindness.** Mum was always kind. No one was left behind. She made many friends and always made sure people were looked after. She came over every week, sometimes twice a week to look after Rory and Kobe when they were little. She made and brought over a lasagne pretty much every week for about four years. Mainly because it was the only thing both children would eat. She would play with Rory, take her out, down the street, all the while cleaning the whole house top to bottom. Mum had a sense of humour. I came home from work one day to find Rory riding on the back of the vacuum cleaner. It was the only way Mum could entertain Rory and get the house clean at the same time. She would take Kobe, who loved trains, down to Yarraville station to watch the trains come and go. As he got a little older, they would get on the train down to Williamstown, get off and have an ice cream, and come back again. She loved being with Rory and Kobe so much.

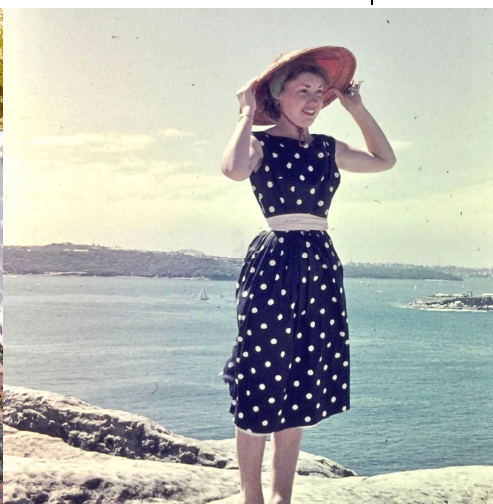
Mum was a force to be reckoned with right to the end. A stroke robbed her, very cruelly, of her ability to communicate in language. But she had other means, and she made Vanessa and me very much aware of what she was thinking and what she wanted. She was well loved at Cresthaven for the smile and regal wave that let people know they were noticed and cared for. We were able to take her out to many places, including, of course, the boutiques of Ivanhoe and to have her hair done 'properly', as well as to gardens, lunches, Christmases, birthdays etc. She was a true lady to the end, and we are all so much richer for having her in our lives.

The reading was John 14:1-6. Denise said in her sermon that Lorna was much loved at St John's. She had had a good long life. In the midst of the joy of living—because of that joy—we grieve. Jesus said, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled', which seems a strange thing to say when we are indeed troubled. But Jesus holds out the hope of eternal life.

He goes before us to prepare a place. 'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places'—unlike at Bethlehem, where there was no room at the inn, God has plenty of room.

Thomas was brave enough to ask the question the disciples were all thinking: 'How do we get there?' Jesus says, "I am the way"—the Jesus that Lorna trusted is the way. In the midst of our grief we can trust the Lord Jesus.

We prayed, we sang *Praise my Soul, the King of Heaven*, and we farewelled Lorna.



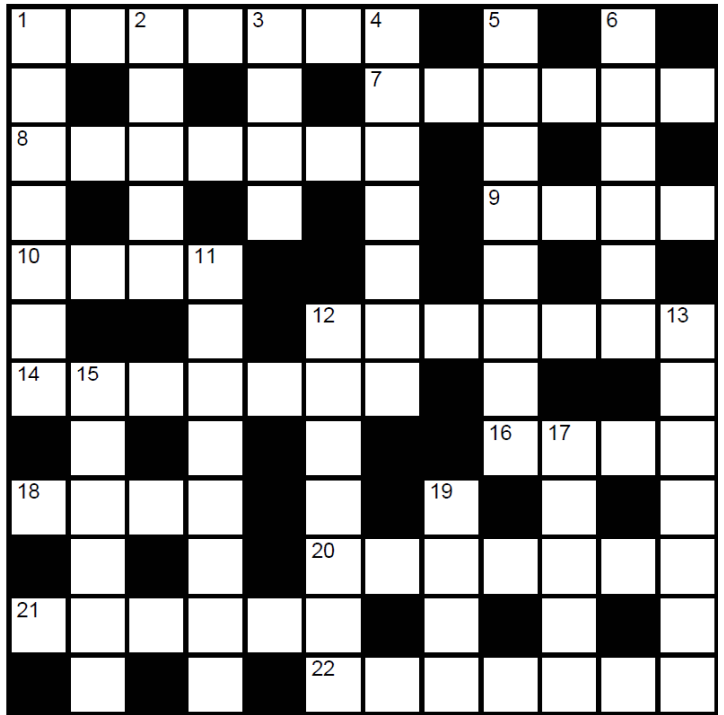


Across

Down

- 1 Resurrected by Peter (7)
- 7 Paid for (6)
- 8 Criminals (7)
- 9 Burden (4)
- 10 Back of the foot (4)
- 12 Giving 10% (7)
- 14 Brief stay (7)
- 16 It's sown (4)
- 18 Gift bearers (4)
- 20 Oath (7)
- 21 Sheep's coat (6)
- 22 Dealers (7)

- 1 Lights (7)
- 2 Scripture (5)
- 3 Life and knowledge, for example (4)
- 4 Desist (7)
- 5 Fell out of a window (8)
- 6 Rocked (6)
- 11 City where it's neither hot nor cold (8)
- 12 Instrument (7)
- 13 Diana, maybe (7)
- 15 One with a vision (6)
- 17 Cast out (5)
- 19 Tiny quantity (4)



by Philologus

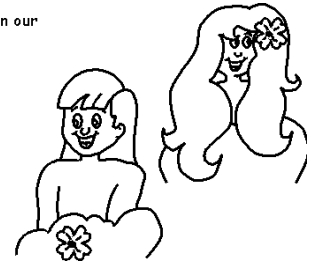
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Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

### Adam & Eve Anagram

www.dltk-kids.com



- efil \_\_\_\_\_
- einquu \_\_\_\_\_
- aenprnt \_\_\_\_\_
- adegnr \_\_\_\_\_
- ahppy \_\_\_\_\_
- aekns \_\_\_\_\_
- bdeiosy \_\_\_\_\_
- aadehms \_\_\_\_\_
- cehlost \_\_\_\_\_
- aeimnoptt \_\_\_\_\_

### Bible Word Search – The Second Coming

All the words listed below are in the puzzle – left, right, up, down or diagonally. Find each word and circle each letter of the words you find. After you have found all the words, the leftover letters form the **mystery answer**.

[https://www.christianbiblereference.org/ws\\_SecondComing\\_0.htm](https://www.christianbiblereference.org/ws_SecondComing_0.htm)

- Almighty, Amazing, Angels, Believers, Blessed, Counselor,
- Daughters, Eternal, Faith, Family, Floods, Followers, Gentle,
- God, Graves, Happiness, Heaven, Holy City, Jesus, Judgment,
- Kind, Life, Lord, Michael, Mountains, Nations, Promise,
- Prophets, Sacrifice, Salvation, Servants, Sinners, Sky, Sons,
- Trumpet, Wonderful, World, Worship

### Answers to last month's puzzles

U	T	T	E	R	E	D		M	O	C	K
N		H		O		A		O		A	
W	A	Y		M	I	N	I	S	T	R	Y
A		A		A		I		A		E	
S	A	T	A	N		E	V	I	L		B
H		I		S		L		C	A	V	E
E	Z	R	A		I		F		W		S
D		A	C	T	S		L	I	G	H	T
	A		C		A		A		I		O
E	N	D	U	R	I	N	G		V	O	W
	N		S		A		O		E		E
H	A	T	E		H	U	N	D	R	E	D

Bible Word Search mystery answer:  
**NEW JERUSALEM**

### Last month's anagram:

- ceeeffl \_\_\_\_\_ fleece
- hioprsw \_\_\_\_\_ worship
- adhnosstu \_\_\_\_\_ thousands
- aekstw \_\_\_\_\_ weakest
- aiorrrw \_\_\_\_\_ warrior
- adeiimnst \_\_\_\_\_ Midianites
- aacktt \_\_\_\_\_ attack
- emprsttu \_\_\_\_\_ trumpets
- eghnrstt \_\_\_\_\_ strength
- cehorst \_\_\_\_\_ torches

## Chris Waghorn: Bible League

29th October 2023

Acts 8:26–40 (PEV)

### Philip talked to a man from Ethiopia

<sup>26</sup>While Philip was in Samaria, one of God's angel messengers came to him and said, "Get up, and go south along the desert road, you know, the road that goes from Jerusalem to the town called Gaza."<sup>27</sup> So Philip got up, and he started to go along that road, and he saw a man from Ethiopia country sitting in a trailer, and horses were pulling the trailer along that road. He was the sort of man that couldn't have any kids. He worked for an important woman called Candace. She was the big boss over Ethiopia. That man was one of her important workers. He looked after all her money. But he had a break from that work and went to Jerusalem to show respect to God, and then he started to go back home along that road.<sup>28</sup> Philip saw him sitting in his trailer, and he was reading God's book. He was reading the part that Isaiah wrote a long time ago. Isaiah was one of God's men that told people God's messages.

<sup>29</sup>Then the Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Catch up with that trailer and walk along beside it."

<sup>30</sup>So Philip ran up close to the trailer, and when he was beside it, he heard that man reading from the words that Isaiah wrote in God's book. Philip asked him, "Can you understand that book you are reading?"

<sup>31</sup>The Ethiopian man said, "No, I can't understand it. I need somebody to help me." Then he asked Philip to climb up into the trailer and sit beside him.<sup>32</sup> He was reading these words in God's book,

"Some people took him away to kill him, just like men take a sheep away to kill it, but he was quiet and didn't say anything. You know that a sheep is quiet, and it doesn't make a noise while men cut off all its wool,

well, he was quiet, just like that.

<sup>33</sup>Men shamed him, and they didn't give him a proper trial in court.

Then they killed him, so now he can't have any kids."

<sup>34</sup>And the Ethiopian man said to Philip, "Who was Isaiah talking about? Was he talking about himself or somebody else?"

<sup>35</sup>Then Philip told him that Isaiah was talking about Jesus. And he kept on talking, and he told that Ethiopian man the good news about Jesus.

<sup>36-37</sup>They kept going along the road, and they came to some water. The Ethiopian man said, "Look, there is some water. I want you to baptise me now."<sup>38</sup> Then he told the man that was controlling the horses to stop. And the Ethiopian man and Philip went down into the water, and Philip baptised the Ethiopian man.

<sup>39</sup>After they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit quickly took Philip away. The Ethiopian man never saw him again, but he was really happy, and he kept going on his way home.

<sup>40</sup>But the Holy Spirit put Philip in a town called Azotus. Philip went around telling people the good news about Jesus. He walked north, and he told the good news about Jesus to the people in all the towns along the way, until he got to the town called Caesarea, and he stayed there.

### Opening prayer

Father God, Abba, Heavenly Father,

I thank you that I can call you Father,

*That you reached your hand out through your son Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit to this Prodigal Son that stands before you today.*

*I thank you for this immense privilege to serve in your Kingdom through the work of the Bible League.*

*Father God, I commit all of the hearts of the people in this room to be opened through your Word in this short talk today, through the power of your Holy Spirit.*

*Lord, I can never thank you enough for the privilege to pray in the name of Jesus. Today, we pray in your name.*

### Introduction

Good morning, my name is Chris Waghorn, and I work for the Bible League as Development Officer in Victoria.

I currently live in Montmorency with my wife and my two boys. Montmorency reminds me of where I grew up, near Winchester in Hampshire, with its trees and rolling hills. If you've seen *Escape to the Country* you already know about it. My adult years were spent in London following my studies in Theology at Kings College.

Jesus said: *Go into all the world and preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.*

As we know the word 'nations' in Greek is *ethnos* which is where we get the expression 'ethnic groups'—people groups.

**QUESTION:** *Can you guess how many ethnic groups there are in the world?*

(ANSWER): There are about 16000.

*How many of those people groups have never been reached by the Gospel?*

About 40%: that is 6500 people groups that have never been reached.

And that is where Bible League comes into it!

### The purpose of Bible League

Bible League resources the under-resourced Church globally through the provision of Bibles, Biblical resources, and training to transform lives worldwide through God's Word and help people meet Jesus.

### Persecution

I'm not sure if you are aware, but in 2019 there were 250,000,000 Christians living in persecution globally. In the year 2021 that number had risen to 340,000,000; and getting resources to them is fraught with danger and getting more and more dangerous every year!

Every quarter we have countries added to the security guidelines watchlist. This means that for Christian missions working in the persecuted world, the work is extremely dangerous.

Now, I didn't know, but if you are a Christian missionary and work in the field, your name automatically gets put on a database for radical Islamist groups. When you arrive in a Muslim country, they know, and you will be tailgated wherever you go. And they will make sure that you do not do any missionary work in their eyes. You get ONE warning!

Also, other-faith communities. We try to bring people out of Islam, Buddhism, and the spiritual slavery of Hinduism.

We also reach out to the poor; however, you can give and give to the poor, but this will only reinforce the poverty cycle. Unless you change their thinking they will always revert back to poverty, The Bible League's Bible-

based literacy courses, however, will help to transform their minds and their thinking. It is here that we make a gentle argument for God's Word and the Holy Spirit.

### Our Method

We have three focused areas of engagement: Project Philip, Bible-based Literacy, and Church Planter Training.

### Project Philip

Bible League's strategy is discipleship. Generally we don't give a Bible unless people are being disciplined. We want people to be physically engaged in reading the Bible. That way it will remain in their hands and be a life study to them. This way the Bible becomes a part of a person's life.

Remember the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch? It is *Acts* that expresses the *modus operandi* of the Bible League most fully. And it is reading out in full from our *Plain English Version*: the PEV that is cited as the best targeted Aboriginal Resource out there!

Project Phillip is a 26-lesson booklet centred on the book of John. Young Christians come and grow in their faith, and go out and bear fruit and that fruit remains.

One could say that in this way the Bible League is like a farmer. A farmer plants the word of God and cares for the seed by watering and fertilising. That way the seed will grow and flourish. Bible League is at the coalface.

### MAIN SERMON NOTES

Now I'm a relatively new Christian: 2015 – 2017. (It was a process, there was no Damascus Rd experience!)

I was disciplined in my Men's Bible Group at my local church in Twickenham in South-West London where I used to live. The Men's Bible Group was called **Fishers of Men**, and we were a motley crew of characters, weirdos, and misfits.

I would like to tell you a little more about my testimony at some point, but suffice to say, reading Scripture as a Christian and with elder brothers is quite an amazing experience.

Through my experience of coming to faith, and having the Spirit indwelling, I was able to understand Scripture and Theology in a way that I had never been able to understand it beforehand. A drastic change had occurred in my heart and in my mind.

The primary purpose of the book of Acts was to give an account of how and where the gospel spread. It says, the gospel spread to the 'end of the Earth', that is, to Rome, which represented the end of the Earth as the centre of world power.

In the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, we have another conversion story.

In Acts 8:26 at the beginning of the story we see that Philip is led to witness to an Ethiopian. This passage strongly emphasises the Spirit's leading. In the book of Acts as a whole, we see many instances where believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ among both Jews and Gentiles...

The designation eunuch probably referred to his having been emasculated. Since he had been to Jerusalem to worship, the eunuch was probably a 'God-Fearer', a Gentile who worshipped Israel's God but had not become a full convert. As a eunuch, he would have been barred from the inner courts of the



Temple, which makes his reading the prophet Isaiah especially significant. Isaiah held out the promise that God would grant devout eunuchs a heritage better than 'sons and daughters'.

Isaiah 56:3-4 says:

*Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say,  
"The Lord will surely separate me from his people";  
and let not the eunuch say,  
"Behold, I am a dry tree."  
For thus says the Lord:  
"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,  
who choose the things that please me  
and hold fast my covenant,  
I will give in my house and within my walls  
a monument and a name  
better than sons and daughters;  
I will give them an everlasting name  
that shall not be cut off."*

We know from this passage that there are two different kinds of Israelites in the world. There's how the Israelites have been acting throughout history up until the present day, and that one day there will come a perfected representative of God, the perfected Israelite who becomes the suffering servant in Isaiah 53, and then we know that this Suffering Servant, this Perfected Representative of God, is going to usher in the Kingdom of God to the world. When we come to Jesus, he explicitly states that He has come to bring in the Kingdom of God to the world.

So, Isaiah 53 and 56 are very interconnected, because when this Kingdom of God reigns here on Earth, this means that this is the moment that eunuchs will be able to enter the Assembly of God.

Therefore, it is no surprise that the eunuch was reading the Prophet Isaiah on his way from Jerusalem.

In verse 30 the Holy Spirit directed Philip to approach the eunuch. People usually read aloud in those days, so Philip was probably aware that the eunuch was reading Isaiah 53.

"Do you know what you are reading?"

I imagine that this is pretty timid because the Ethiopian is in charge of all of the treasure of Candace. This means that this Ethiopian Eunuch is

- A) Super-Wealthy
- B) Super-Powerful,
- C) and Super-Important,

He probably had a whole caravan of chariots behind him. Now Philip runs right up to the head one. That would be like me running up to the Head of the FBI (or in this case Jim Chalmers), and asking him if he knew what the Prophet of Isaiah was saying.

This is exactly what the Spirit has done in the book of Acts since the beginning. Remember that Jesus says the Spirit of God will be given to believers so that they will be empowered and emboldened to go and preach the gospel and the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

So this is exactly what we should expect since we have seen how the Spirit operates at Pentecost and in Samaria.

A more appropriate passage could not have been chosen as a witness to Christ, attesting to the Holy Spirit's leading. The passage focuses on the injustice done to Jesus, and reflects Luke's concern for the presentation of the Cross.

V 36: The direction of the Holy Spirit in this incident is apparent again as Philip and the eunuch arrive at a rare watering place in the desert precisely when the eunuch requested Baptism.

The eunuch is so emphatic about learning about what Jesus has done. That Jesus is the prophesised Israelite from Isaiah, and that because Jesus has come and died, this means that the Kingdom of God is ushered here on Earth, which means that he can faithfully, truly and rightly enter into the Assembly of God. And because he is so emphatic about this he wants to proclaim the good news that he has just heard out into the world. He wants a public declaration of this good news.

And let me step out of the Biblical text and use my God-given powers of imagination. I bet that he proclaimed this good news to all of the people in his caravan!

I think that this Ethiopian eunuch goes back to Ethiopia and shouts from the rooftops about the Good News that he has just heard!

This is how the story ends. Philip continues on. From Samaria to the end of the Earth he has been preaching the good news. Everywhere Philip has been preaching, the Spirit is with him, encouraging him, emboldening him, and empowering him to share the gospel.

You see this story is about the saving power of Scripture...

The main theme here in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch is salvation through the Word... salvation through the Gospel...

No matter how you are perceived in the world, you are forgiven, and entered into the Assembly of God. And that according to the eunuch is very good news!

There is no point giving a Bible unless people can read. So we are teaching both adults and children to read using Biblical precepts and concepts.

If we bring Christian education to people it will help to change culture.

Gained significant traction in immigrant populations...

### Church planting

We are also involved with church planting. Since we began in 1938 we have helped to plant 77,000 churches.

We are currently planting 1638 churches a year. That's over 4.48 every day!

For a church planter to graduate they have to have 30 adults minimum for one church. Some will go on to plant more than one church. The average planter plants 1.87 churches.

I found out an incredible statistic the other day: out of the 8000 churches in Nepal, the Bible League has planted 2400 churches.

A quick mission field story here involves Nepal. Whilst in Nepal a man takes a box of Bibles to a village up in the mountains. I ask him, "How far are you walking?"

The man says 50 kilometres!

Your sacrifice in giving is partnered by sacrifices in ministry!

We run an efficient model: it's the Church Partners that provide labour. We empower the locals.

### Australian mission

15% of the funds we raise in Australia go back into missions in Australia.

This is probably our most famous resource: the Prison Bible.

It is a great resource as it has 52 life-learning lessons in it – how does a prisoner deal with authorities in prison, out of prisons, and preparation for following Jesus. You can't smoke the paper!

This year we supplied 8000 Prison Bibles in Australia (Bringing Hope Behind Bars + SEV (Simplified English Version)).

### Indigenous Australians

We have been working with retired Wycliffe translators on a simplified English Version purely for Indigenous Australians. There is no cost for this resource so if you know anyone who is involved in Indigenous Ministry, you can point them to Bible League's Indigenous page. People can also download the PDF version. There are eleven booklets and it has taken many years to translate what we have so far.

The PEV has been designed primarily for Aboriginal people whose own mother tongue is not English, and uses English in a way that mirrors the speech patterns of traditional Top End languages. This includes grammar (for example, no passive-voice constructions), vocabulary (for example, limiting the use of abstract nouns) and sentence construction (for example, shorter sentences with fewer embedded clauses).

Using the PEV creates something of a level playing field for everyone, while not being any one group's heart language.

### Some numbers

Bible League grew 30% last year.

Bible League has grown through its ministry. Not through fundraising!

40% of Bible League Ministry across the World is focused on Children & Youth!

Bible League are currently in 70 nations doing what we are all called to do as part of the Great Commission – that is to prepare people for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's difficult to see at a granular level what God is doing. That is why I would like everybody to take a copy of the Prayer Calendar.

### Ukraine campaign

If you've been watching the heartbreaking scenes from Ukraine on the news and searching for a way to help, you're not alone.

Most striking of all is that it is ordinary people's lives that we are seeing destroyed and dismantled. And this is even before we begin to talk about the irreplaceable destruction of its art, culture, and identity.

Bible League local partners are on the ground, meeting urgent needs for refugees fleeing unspeakable violence and pouring across borders into neighbouring countries.

One of our Bible League source partner describes the scene:

*"The pain of the local people is enormous. They do not show fear or despair, but anxiety about the unknown. And they are responding to the words of hope and strength found in the Living Word of God as a lifeline."*

God's Word is a lifeline. It's so true!

But they tell us they have NO Bibles!

So, I want to invite you into an opportunity to act today to help bring real relief and hope to people who have lost everything.

Bible League is currently printing full Bibles and New Testaments in both Ukrainian and

Russian languages to distribute to refugees through our partners on the ground. We are also engaged with distributing food, providing shelter, and trauma counselling.

### How can you be involved?

Please pray for us. We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities.

### Source partner

We need you to partner with us in what God is doing in the field by becoming a source partner.

### One million Bibles

You can help send 1 million Bibles that are heading to Ukrainian refugees! Here's how...

Your gift today of...

- \$45 can provide 5 full Bibles
- \$75 can provide 25 New Testaments

Now, each Bible is read by an average of 5 people and can impact an entire community.

Your gift today of...

- \$45 → 5 full Bibles: can help 25 refugees
- \$75 → 25 New Testaments: 125 refugees

A family of five can help to transform a community.

There is a huge opportunity here, ladies and gentlemen, the hunger for God's Word is enormous!

And God meets us in the times of our greatest need.

### Thank you

If Bible League has touched your heart and you would like to contribute, please see me outside after the service.

Thank you very much for your time this morning.

I would like to read Luke 12:32–34. I would like you to read the passage that comes immediately before this which is most appropriate.

<sup>32</sup> "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

## All Hallows

5th November 2023, St John's

1 John 3:1–3; Revelation 7:9–17

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

### 1 John 3:1–3

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

<sup>2</sup> Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

### Revelation 7:9–17

<sup>9</sup> After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice:

'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'

<sup>11</sup> All the angels were standing round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, <sup>12</sup> saying:

'Amen!  
Praise and glory  
and wisdom and thanks and honour  
and power and strength  
be to our God for ever and ever.  
Amen!'

<sup>13</sup> Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in white robes – who are they, and where did they come from?'

<sup>14</sup> I answered, 'Sir, you know.'

And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> Therefore,

'they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

<sup>16</sup> "Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them," nor any scorching heat.

<sup>17</sup> For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd;

"he will lead them to springs of living water."

"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Last week up at Watsonia our church participated in the 'trick or treating' event that happened. A number of people dressed up: I saw Zion dressed up as Voltron; I saw Jonathan dressed up as a skeleton that glowed in the dark; I had a fetching little fascinator hat on—that's all I had on.<sup>1</sup>

But Halloween is something that's becoming quite popular within our culture. I particularly like this one of the doggy: I thought that was pretty good.



Now a couple of things about what we see happening around us in Halloween.

What we see nowadays is very much an American suggestion of how it's celebrated, with people dressing up and trick or treating and things like that. But originally it came from a festival that was celebrated in Ireland

<sup>1</sup> The Editor does not believe this was true.

and Britain and parts of France about 2000 years ago—**Samhain**. It celebrated the coming of winter, and that was the start of their new year. It was a start of long nights—and remember, before electric light night could be very scary, so very long nights were difficult for people.

And the way that you pronounce that, because it's Celtic, I think it's 'SAHwin'. Is that correct, Peter? You will . . . [Editor: I don't know.] Oh my goodness! Strike! Can we note that down? Hello, people on live stream, can you note that down? That's going in the *Babble*, people, Peter didn't know something! That's pretty amazing! Oh, Peter is my go-to person—if there's a word I think, oh, strike I don't know what that is: Peter will know.<sup>2</sup>

Often in the way Halloween is celebrated now, it's sort of people dress up as ghosts (even if you're a puppy dog) and things of what happens after you die. So it might be people dress as ghosts or other sorts of things and thinking about scary things after you die.

A couple of years ago I was up in Ballarat art gallery with a friend, and they had a big exhibition of the Mexican Day of the Dead, which occurs around this time as well. And I'd always wondered why Mexicans have a fascination with skeletons. If you go to the Mexican restaurant up the road, there are two little skeletons sitting there on the counter, and they have little hats on and stuff. And I thought what is it about skeletons and stuff? I thought, you know, what is this? And it was fascinating at the art installation, there were people, and there were even little skeletons of dogs and cats and things. It's a way that the people in Mexico remember their loved ones.



So it's thinking about the people who have died. And so for them it's not ghoulish or terrible, but it's a celebration, and that's often why it's in very bright colours. It's thinking about the people they have loved who have died.

Well, Halloween is actually the eve of All Hallows.

In the church on 1st November we celebrate **All Saints' Day** = All 'Hallows'. Now I wonder if you notice about the picture—so see the people here, you see what they've got there on their heads: it's not a fishbowl, it's called a *nimbus*. If you look at the picture over here [in St John's], in the stained glass of Jesus, he has one on his head there as well; King David as well has one on his head. It's sort of glowiness to symbolise that these people were devoted to God. So on 1st November the church would celebrate and

<sup>2</sup> Having now looked it up, the Editor advises that Wikipedia gives 'i' sa:win/ SAH-win' as an anglicised representation, but ['səʊni] for the Irish Gaelic, which to the Editor's ears sounds quite different, with a schwa for the first vowel.





remember all those wonderful people who have gone before us who trusted in God—All Hallows' or All Saints' Day. So All Hallows' Eve became 'Halloween'.

I love this beautiful old painting: I love how they picture people. But I also love some of the modern ways of depicting different parts of Scripture, or different ideas.

What are we talking about today? We're talking about—like Halloween celebrates all things ghoully, and All Saints Day celebrates those who have gone before us—today I want to focus upon the fact that **being a child of God is forever**. It is forever, because God is forever.

Being a child of God begins **now**. When we give our life to Jesus, when we ask Jesus into our hearts, when we acknowledge that he is our Saviour, we are a child of God from that second on. It doesn't matter how old we are, it doesn't matter how young we are: we are a child of God.

From our first reading, we have this lovely statement, *See what great love the Father has lavished on us*. Isn't that a great word, 'lavished'? It's the opposite of 'stingy'. *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!* Now, that begins now, but it continues into eternity. Eternal life is something which begins *now*, and *continues* on to eternity.

Now I love it in the Scriptures that they give us these great pictures—word pictures, or images—of what it's like to be with God. In the book of Revelation that Sarah read for us, and as we all took part in our reading today, we have this great thing of, you know what do the children of God look like, when they are with God in heaven.

Well, we have this wonderful image that there before John (who saw this image) was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language. **What do the children of God look like? They look like us.** They look like people from around the world: different time zones, different eras, different language, different skin—people from all around the world who have put their trust in Jesus.

So we have these images—and remember Revelation is a book full of picture imagery, and some of it is quite challenging. And, as

we heard in our reading, **what do the people of God do and say?** Well, the first thing is that they stand *before the throne* and *before the Lamb*. So we've got this picture of John, who saw the vision, in heaven, with God on his throne and the Lamb. I wonder who that is? Can you remember? Who was the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world? John told us about him. Who do you reckon it is, Will? That's right, Jesus! Well done! Jesus is the Lamb.

From the Scripture reading we now that John saw that the people are wearing white robes, which means they've been cleansed; and they're holding palm branches. Do you remember another time in our church calendar when we often have palm branches in the church? Palm Sunday! When we welcome Jesus the King riding into Jerusalem, and we cry 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' But that image that we have in heaven is that people are holding palm branches and they're crying out, *'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'*

So we have this image of the people of God—the children of God—it doesn't specify their ages, does it?—and let's face it, we're all children. Even someone who's older like me: I'm a child of my mum and dad, and you young people are children of your parents, and they're children of your grandparents, and so on and so on.

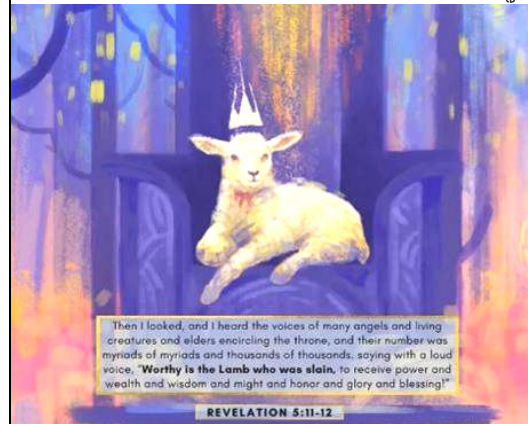
*'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'* Well the imagery of the Lamb in Scripture is really interesting. Here are some of the ways that the lamb has been depicted.



<https://derekdemars.com/2020/09/25/figthing-our-battles-the-lamb-s-way-revelation-5/>

In a beautiful stained glass window: I wonder if when we finish church today if you can see any pictures—I couldn't remember if we've got a picture of a lamb anywhere in our stained glass windows.

Or here's another one, a more modern one. You can see the lamb has a little crown on his head, but he also has blood because he's been sacrificed.



Well, here's one that would be a good Halloween costume: it's a little bit scary, because the Lamb has seven eyes. In Scripture it says the Lamb had seven eyes and seven horns. Again, it's a bit like dreams, how dreams sort of all get mixed up; but in the Scriptures, eyes mean wisdom. Seven—a perfect number: infinite wisdom, infinite power.



And this beautiful painting, which I've seen the original of, is just beautiful, isn't it?



Francisco de Zurbarán, *Agnus Dei* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamb\\_of\\_God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamb_of_God)

So the idea of the Lamb.

Of course, when we think about the Lamb we think about the Lord Jesus, and how he is the Good Shepherd. Revelation 7:17: *For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.* So a bit different this one from the previous pictures of the Lamb. Here we have the Lamb—or Jesus the Lamb—carrying a lamb—carrying us—as the Good Shepherd. And what does the shepherd do? The Lamb wipes away every tear from their eyes. God wipes away all of our tears.



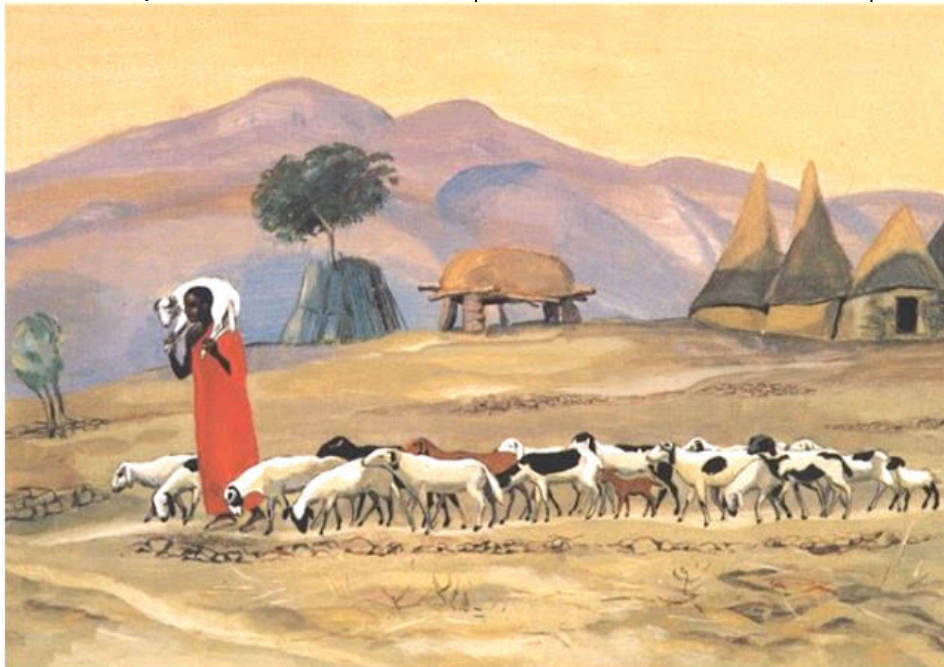
https://05vanvara.wordpress.com/2015/05/23/unknown-artist-christ-the-good-shepherd-undated-2000s-greek/



Below is another piece of art which shows a picture of the Good Shepherd. I love this one. This is from a painter in Cameroon, and you can see the Good Shepherd is helping the one who is weak.

In that passage that we had read, we had the picture of the Lamb and the picture of the people: so one lamb, Jesus, a multitude of people; but there are also angels. Now angels are depicted in many ways in Scripture. This time the author of Revelation doesn't actually describe the angels; in different places in the Scriptures, angels are described as having six wings; sometimes two wings; often we see little pictures of angels as little fat babies; but in the Scriptures an angel means 'messenger', so it was always a messenger of God. And what are the angels doing? The angels praise God for the salvation of—not them, but human beings.

*All the angels were standing round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before*



JESUS MAFA, *The good shepherd*, <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-image/ink.pl?RC=48288>

*the throne and worshipped God, saying: 'Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!'*

So we have this beautiful picture image of all the people standing before God: people whom we know and have loved, who have trusted in Jesus, who have gone to God; those who have died, people that we've buried from this church just recently: our dear Syd, other people whom we know and love. **We can be confident that they are still children of God like we are.** They are with God; and God's messengers praise God for the salvation that God brings through the Lamb for all people.

Which brings us back to that we are children of God. How amazing! What great love! See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! Do you remind yourself daily that you are a child of God? You know a great way of doing this is saying the Lord's prayer. 'Our Father in heaven' reminds us that God is our loving heavenly father, that we are his children.

And, although Halloween marks one day when people go out trick-or-treating and getting food and stuff, the idea of us being children of God lasts forever. It begins now when we put our trust in Jesus and it lasts into eternity.

The image that God gives us in the book of Revelation, is that **image of God with his people**; and there's a countless number: a number no one can count. We can be there. We will all be there—all of us who trust in Jesus.

So, we don't have to worry about what happens to those whom we love after they die, or about us. We don't have to worry about scary things. We can be confident that we are God's children now, and into eternity.

So I wonder if next time Halloween comes around, you might remember the day after Halloween. So not just all the fun of dressing up that kids like to do these days, and get given food (treats usually—not oranges—I don't think they'd like that, if you gave them an orange or an apple; it's usually chocolate or lollies and stuff) but we remember the picture of God's people gathered around the throne and all those who have gone before us and whom we will join one day. And we can be thankful to God for his love lavished upon us.

## Heaven

5th November 2023, Holy Spirit

Revelation 7:9–17; 1 John 3:1–3

Sermon by Helen McAlley

### Revelation 7:9–17

<sup>9</sup> *After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.* <sup>10</sup> *And they cried out in a loud voice:*

*'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'*

<sup>11</sup> *All the angels were standing round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God,* <sup>12</sup> *saying:*

*'Amen!*

*Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever.*

*Amen!*

<sup>13</sup> *Then one of the elders asked me, 'These in white robes – who are they, and where did they come from?'*

<sup>14</sup> *I answered, 'Sir, you know.'*

*And he said, 'These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'* <sup>15</sup> *Therefore,*

*'they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.*

<sup>16</sup> *'Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst.*

*The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat.*

<sup>17</sup> *For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd;*

*'he will lead them to springs of living water.'*

*"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

### 1 John 3:1–3

<sup>3</sup> *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

<sup>2</sup> *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* <sup>3</sup> *All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.*

### VISIONS OF HEAVEN

I've got an interesting book at home which I've read more than once. It's called *Visions beyond the Veil – Visions of Paradise*. The author is H.A. Baker. The blurb on the back explains how Chinese children who had been street beggars arrived at the Adullum Rescue Mission (where the Bakers were ministering) and asked God to reveal Himself to them. 'Unlearned and unschooled, they experienced revelations and visions of heaven surprisingly accurate to the Biblical account.' The children experienced powerful outpourings of the Holy Spirit which went on for days. They saw angels and talked with them; they played in the gardens of Paradise and saw the saints of old. They also saw the awfulness of hell, the anguish of lost souls and the hellish power



of the devil and his angels. But freedom from the clutches of the evil one – their salvation – was just as real. They had wonderful joy, peace and laughter as they realised that they had been saved through the precious blood of Jesus.

In the Spirit, the children were transported to heaven and (like the apostle Paul who also described visions of heaven), did not know if they were in the body or out of the body. Coming close to the heavenly city, they saw the beautiful wall radiating its wonderful jasper light. They entered through pearly gates into a city with golden streets. There were many angels who were always willing to escort the children from place to place in the city. The climax of all heavenly joy and wonder was seeing Jesus. When they came into His wonderful presence, they stood reverently gazing with love and devotion upon the Lord. First of all they thanked Him, adoringly worshipping Him. Then they bowed their faces to the floor in true worship.

In the Spirit the children saw other children they had known who had died that year. These boys were constantly seen in heaven and their names frequently shouted with ecstasy and joy. If any of the children still living had died during those days, the others would have envied him the privilege.

There is so much more of this wonderful glimpse into heaven and other books more recently have described similar experiences.

#### A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

The writer Randy Alcorn has written a thought-provoking book called simply *Heaven*. He writes how a pastor once confessed to him that he felt rather depressed when he thought of heaven. When asked why, he replied, 'I can't stand the thought of that endless tedium. To float around the clouds with nothing to do but strum a harp....It's all terribly boring'.

Alcorn continues, 'Where did this Bible-believing seminary-educated pastor get such a view of heaven? Certainly not from the Scripture, where Paul said that to depart and live with Christ was "far better" than staying on a sin-cursed earth'.

Alcorn believes there is a present heaven where we will dwell prior to our bodily resurrection. Though this present heaven is a wonderful place, it is not the place we have been ultimately made for. God's children are destined for a life as resurrected beings on a resurrected earth.

Paul writes that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to this present time.

Isaiah writes of this new earth in this way, 'Behold I will create a new heaven and a new earth...for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and crying will be heard in it no more...They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit...The wolf and the lamb will feed together and the lion will eat straw like the ox....They will not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain' says the Lord.

Jesus is coming to restore the universe and humankind to what He had originally planned for it. Through His death and resurrection, he aims to restore His creation to what it was originally. There will be no more curse or any of the results of sin. God will dwell with us face to face as He did in the

Garden of Eden. The ground will be fertile. There will be abundant food and water. There will be no sin and Alcorn believes we will be unable to sin. We'll be with the people we love doing the things that we most enjoy doing here.

#### JOHN'S VISION OF HEAVEN

In our Bible readings today, we have glimpses into what heaven will be like. The Revelation passage shows us a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language. It is a reminder that Jesus loved all those in the world and all who come to Him are welcome. They are robed in white, which symbolises purity – being cleansed from all their sin through accepting Jesus as their Saviour and the one who forgives all our sin. They have palm branches in their hands. Waving the palm branches is a way of worshipping God, just as people waved palm branches to praise Jesus in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem before His crucifixion. They cry out with loud voices signifying a depth of emotion and praise God the Father and Jesus the Lamb of God. The angels and the living creatures around the throne join in this wonderful time of worship, *Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.*

How wonderful it will be when we too get to heaven and can join in the praise to the Father and His Son Jesus!

#### JESUS OUR SHEPHERD

Those in heaven will no longer be subject to the things that can hurt us here on earth – hunger, thirst, the scorching heat of the sun. Jesus will be our shepherd, meaning He will care for us. He will guide us to the springs of the water of life which means all our deepest needs will be satisfied. And we also read that God will wipe away all tears from our eyes. This verse is repeated in chapter 21 of Revelation. When something is repeated, it means that it is important. We will never be sad again, but light-hearted and full of joy and gladness.

#### WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM

The apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation and he also wrote the epistle that we read from today. Because He loves us, God the Father calls us children of God. We do not fully understand what it will be like in the future but we will be like Jesus. I think that might mean that our resurrected bodies will be like that of Jesus. He had a material body. He assured His disciples after His resurrection that He was not a ghost or a spirit and ate a piece of fish in front of them to demonstrate that (Luke 24:36–42). Just as He was sinless, so we too will be sinless. His body could move quickly from one place to another and He could go through locked doors. His resurrection body was not subject to decay or death and that will be the same with our resurrection bodies.

We have a wonderful future in heaven and later on the new earth awaiting us because we are God's children, and this should encourage us when we go through difficult times here on earth. The apostle Paul wrote that the trials that we endure are not worthy to be compared to the glory that will one day be revealed to us.

#### HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

We are encouraged by thoughts of heaven, but the apostle John also writes that the hope

that we have should encourage us to lead holy lives or to purify ourselves. With the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we keep close to the Lord. We meditate on God's word and seek to obey it always. If the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, rather than becoming defensive, we quickly agree with Him and ask for forgiveness and help to keep away from that sin in the future. We use our spiritual gifts to bless others and we are willing to share our faith with others when the Lord directs us. We ask that the Lord will guide us to do His will each day. We thank Him for the victory that He gives us in every situation and we refuse to accept the condemnation of the enemy when we have prayed for forgiveness. We do what is right even if we don't feel like doing it. We remember always the words of Jesus that without Him we can do nothing, but we remind ourselves that we are 'in Christ' and can do all that he calls us to do because he strengthens us. The thought of our future home in heaven is a powerful motivator to live holy lives. We will never be perfect in this life and the Lord knows that, but, with His help we live each day in His service.

#### PRAYER

*Lord we thank you for the glimpses that you have given us of heaven. We thank you for our Saviour Jesus Christ whose death and resurrection have made heaven a wonderful reality that we can look forward to. May the thought of heaven motivate us to live holy lives while we are here on Earth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Two Bible passages

12th November 2023

**Joshua 24:1–3a,14–25; Matthew 25:1–13**

*Sermon by Sarah Coe*

#### Joshua 24: 1–3a,14–25

*24 Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.*

<sup>2</sup> *Joshua said to all the people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River Euphrates and worshipped other gods."<sup>3</sup> But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. . .*

<sup>14</sup> *'Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshipped beyond the River Euphrates and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.<sup>15</sup> But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.'*

<sup>16</sup> *Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!<sup>17</sup> It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we travelled.<sup>18</sup> And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God.'*

<sup>19</sup> *Joshua said to the people, 'You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion*

and your sins. <sup>20</sup> If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.'

<sup>21</sup> But the people said to Joshua, 'No! We will serve the LORD.'

<sup>22</sup> Then Joshua said, 'You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD.'

'Yes, we are witnesses,' they replied.

<sup>23</sup> 'Now then,' said Joshua, 'throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.'

<sup>24</sup> And the people said to Joshua, 'We will serve the LORD our God and obey him.'

<sup>25</sup> On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws.

### Matthew 25:1-13

<sup>25</sup> 'At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. <sup>4</sup> The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

<sup>6</sup> 'At midnight the cry rang out: "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!"

<sup>7</sup> Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> The foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out."

<sup>9</sup> "No," they replied, "there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves."

<sup>10</sup> 'But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

<sup>11</sup> 'Later the others also came. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us!"

<sup>12</sup> 'But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I don't know you."

<sup>13</sup> 'Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Today we have two very different Bible passages, and we are going to consider both of their messages.

In the book of Joshua, Joshua challenges the people of Israel: Choose today whom you will serve!

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells a parable and warns: Watch and be prepared for his return – and his judgement!

We'll look at the context of these passages, and then we'll look at how those commands apply to us today.

#### First up: Joshua

Joshua is over a hundred years old, and he is coming to the end of a very eventful life. As a kid, Joshua grew up as a slave making bricks in the land of Egypt, along with all the rest of the Israelites. But God used Moses to free the Israelites and bring them to the land God had promised them, and at some point young Joshua became Moses' assistant. However, because Moses disobeyed God, God forbade Moses to enter the promised land. God appointed Joshua to lead the Israelites to conquer the land.

Along the way, Joshua has witnessed the consequences of disobedience many times. Armies of his men have been killed in battle. Fear and disobedience meant that his whole generation lost out on entering the land God

had promised, and they wandered in the desert for forty years. Families have been destroyed for their rebellion. But those who obeyed God have now entered the promised land, have won it, and they've been able to settle down, plant vineyards and get farms going. God has fought for them, God has blessed them, God has rescued them.

So as old Joshua summons the people, the elders, the judges, the officials, and everyone else to give them his last words, he's deadly serious. Choose today whom you will serve! Will you serve God, the one and only true God, who rescued you? Or will you serve other gods? The gods of the nations around you?

The people are insistent. Yes! Yes, we will serve the Lord!

Joshua says: No, you are not able to serve the Lord. God is holy and he will not tolerate your rebellion and sin. When you rebel, he will not always be forgiving you – he will punish you.

But the people protest. No! No, we will serve the Lord!

And Joshua says. 'You, you are each witnesses of each other and of all of you, that you have all chosen to serve the Lord. Prove it. Throw away your idols. Serve God with all your hearts.'

#### Next up: Jesus

Roughly 2000 years ago, and about 1400 years after Joshua, Jesus has arrived in Jerusalem to celebrate his last Passover with his disciples before he is to be betrayed and crucified. There are a few days to go. He's been to the temple, upset the religious leaders by telling them off, and now he and his disciples have wandered off to hang out at the Mount of Olives and discuss his return, the end of the world, and God's final judgement.

Jesus has much to say, but his main instructions, to his disciples and to all Christians, including us, is: *Be ready, be watchful*. And to illustrate his point he tells a story, a parable. Five wise girls have made sure they have enough oil for their lamps as they wait for the bridegroom. Five foolish girls have not brought oil. As the bridegroom arrives, they have to dash off and buy oil for their lamps – and they miss out on the wedding festivities.

Unfortunately we don't know enough about wedding customs of the time to be able to say exactly why the oil is important and what it might mean, but fortunately Jesus finishes his story by repeating his main point for us: 'Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.' The day or the hour when Jesus returns and brings judgement for the world's rebellion against God.

So:

Joshua challenges the people of Israel: Choose today whom you will serve!

Jesus tells a parable and warns: Watch and be prepared for his return – and his judgement!

Choose today whom you will serve. Watch, and be prepared for Christ's return.

At the heart of these commands is the idea of commitment. Have you carefully considered what it means to choose to call Jesus your Lord and Saviour? Have you considered what it means to refuse to call Jesus your Lord and Saviour? And are you committed, daily, to choose, to serve, to watch, to be prepared to face God?

I think the marriage vows of the Prayer Book bring these passages together beautifully. In the marriage service, the minister asks the groom and the bride these questions: (paraphrased)

Will you give yourself to this person, to live with them according to God's word?

Will you love them, comfort them, honour and protect them, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to them so long as you both shall live?

And the groom and the bride shall each answer 'I will'.

And then the minister asks the congregation as witnesses to these marriage vows: 'Will you do everything in your power to uphold this couple in their marriage?' To which the congregation answer 'We will'.

In marrying someone, you choose that person in an exclusive relationship. You choose to dedicate your lives, your selves, to living with each other, loving each other, honouring each other. You choose to be utterly loyal and faithful to each other, forsaking all potential spouses, committing to be faithful your whole life.

In a similar way, we are called to commit to God, to make a firm decision to follow him above all other loyalties. As Christians we witness to each other's declaration of faith, of our commitment expressed in baptism and confirmation, and in coming together to share in the Lord's Supper, the bread and the wine, as we remember how he saves us.

But why? Who is God that we should choose to serve him?

Did you notice, in Joshua chapter 24 verse two, Joshua is directly giving God's message to the people of Israel? God speaks, and God reminds Israel from verses 2-13 of all that he has done for the people of Israel.

Who is God?

God is their saviour. He rescued them from slavery and brought them out of Egypt.

God is our Saviour. God sent Jesus to die and pay the price of our rebellion, rescuing us from bondage to sin and death and corruption.

God is their warrior, their protector. He fights their battles and prevents curses from having any power over them.

God is our warrior, our protector. God rules over all other powers and authorities.

God is their provider. He makes the people a nation and gives them land.

God is our provider. He makes us citizens of his kingdom and provides all our needs.

God is holy and just. He calls on Israel to obey him and live with integrity, justice, and honour towards God and towards all people.

And God calls us to be a holy people, filled with the Spirit, living and growing in love, kindness, goodness, and self-control.

The last book of the Bible, Revelation, is a strange one, full of visions and imagery as it tries to explain what will happen when Jesus returns. But it starts with messages from Jesus to seven churches. Broadly speaking, this is what Jesus tells them: if you have lost your love for God, repent and recover your love. Be faithful to God. Are you allowing evil in your lives and in your church? Repent and turn from it. Hold onto what God has taught you and don't allow any corruption. Watch, strengthen, repent, and grow. Hold fast. Consider God your highest treasure. If you as a Christian have become too focused on



money and wealth and things, Jesus says 'I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with them' (see Revelation 3:20).

In other words: Choose today whom you will serve. Watch! Be prepared to meet the Lord Jesus whenever he might come. Following the Lord is not naturally automatic. We easily serve other loyalties over God: serving and chasing after money, fame, entertainment. Making our businesses or our studies or our families more important than God. For me, lately, I've had to consider computer games. It's not that games are wrong, but one or two games were taking up my whole attention all day, and I had to stop playing them.

So let us all choose, today, and every day we have on this earth, to serve the Lord above all other loyalties and interests we have. Let us choose each day to love our Lord Jesus as He loves us. Let us choose to watch out and repent of sin and evil in our lives. Let us choose to hold fast to our faith and hope in God. Let us choose, daily, to love God, and to love our neighbours as we love ourselves in all we do and say.

If you have not yet accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, and decided to follow him in God's way, consider carefully and make your choice. It is the most serious, most important decision of your life. Do not brush it off.

If you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, remember that following God means choosing every day to obey him and love him as he loves and cares for you.

Choose today whom you will serve. Choose God, today and every day, and be prepared to meet him joyfully when he comes.

### Denise nails it

19th November 2023

Judges 4:1-10; Philippians 1:1-11

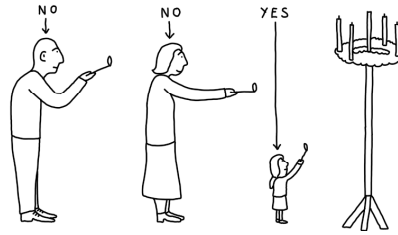
Sermon by Denise Nicholls



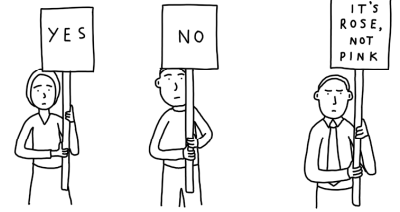
No further comment necessary.

# ADVENT

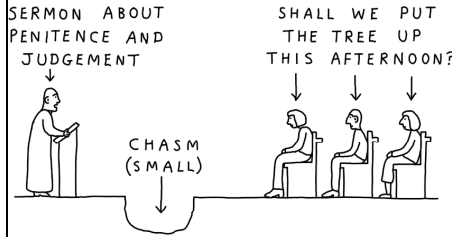
CONTROVERSIES



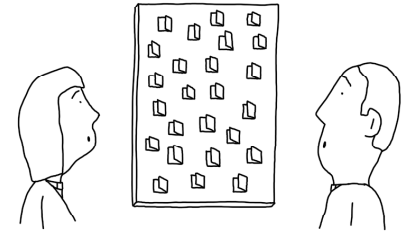
WHO WILL LIGHT THE CANDLES ON THE ADVENT WREATH?



SHOULD THE WREATH HAVE ONE PINK CANDLE?



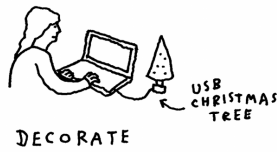
WHETHER TO PREACH ON CHALLENGING ADVENT THEMES



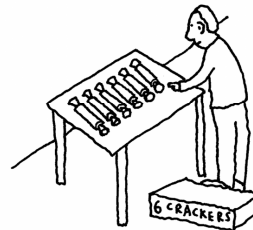
WHO COULD HAVE EATEN THE VESTRY ADVENT CALENDAR CHOCOLATES?

CartoonChurch.com

# PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS



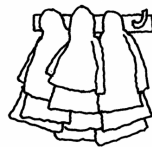
DECORATE



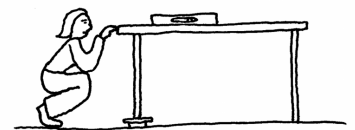
COUNT THE CRACKERS



THINK ABOUT BUYING SOME FOOD



CLEAR A SPARE COAT HOOK FOR VISITORS



LEVEL THE DINING TABLE



WAIT IN DOING NOTHING IN CASE THE ONLINE ORDER IS DELIVERED TODAY



AIR THE SPROUTS



TIDY A BIT



## Parish Council Notes

### Meeting of Monday 13th November

#### Business arising

- Diocese has selected XERO accounting software as preferred system; parishes encouraged to switch. Diocese offering to meet the first two year's subscription costs for parishes and pay for transfer of past 12 months of data.

#### Annual Parish Meeting

- Denise thanked all who submitted reports.
- Auditor had no concerns about accounts: received back, will be distributed at APM.
- Projected budget for 2023/24 prepared and circulated. Includes allowance for a part-time assistant for Denise. Approved for the APM subject to NELP grant and a few changes.

#### Finance report

- October: deficit of \$26,150, largely due to \$14,360 spent on further preparatory work for the restoration of St John's, out of \$40,000 transferred earlier from the Crystal Dunn fund; and \$6,000 spent transferring the St Andrew's Memorial Garden to St John's—should be recoverable from sale of Rosanna property.
- Glenn Ambrose has kindly volunteered to be Parish Treasurer. Emmi took him to meet the Parish auditor. Glenn is familiar with XERO.

#### St John's porch

- One of the finials on the bell tower has fallen off onto the path behind the Upper Hall: not sure when exactly, discovered late last week. What caused it to fall is unknown and since it is weighty enough to cause severe injury, the wardens cordoned off the area around the bell tower and moved last Sunday's service to the Upper Hall. Denise thanked the Wardens, Jonathan and Sarah for all they did to ensure that this service ran smoothly.
- Wardens, with architect David Wagner and builder Peter Harper, since working to find what should be done next. Builder suggested use cherry-picker to remove remaining finials & any other loose or dangerous masonry, and replace when the building is restored—we'd be able to resume using the building very soon. However, Heritage Victoria have made it clear this is not permissible. They advised that any remedial activity must be approved by them, and anything done without their approval would result in an enforcement letter from them requiring rectification, and a potential fine. HV reportedly perceives the issue as the responsibility of the parish & reflective of lack of maintenance.
- Agreed the service preceding the APM on Nov 19 should be moved to the Upper Hall.
- Since a rapid resolution appears out of the question, wardens are looking into the possibility (and cost) of installing hoarding to provide

a safe passageway to the front entrance of the church building. Implications for all users of the church being assessed; let St Peter's know what is happening.

#### Rosanna property

- The closing date for Expressions of Interest in purchasing the Rosanna property is Nov 15. Whilst advertising generated 35 enquiries, at this stage there is limited interest. Reasons:
  - Construction costs and recent interest rate rise
  - Concern re achievable sales in the area
  - Vegetation on the site and associated overlays
- Meeting of stakeholders on Wednesday to consider submissions.
- To review parish's contractual arrangements re the sale at next Parish Council meeting.

#### ADOM Compliance Calendar

- November extract circulated: mostly relates to the APM, under control.

#### Child Safety

- Jonathan is our current Child Safety Officer: need to find a replacement before he leaves.

#### OH&S issues new this month

- To be changed to 'OH&S issues – current'. To compile a list of current OH&S issues.

#### Vicar's report

- Report for 2022–23 in the APM booklet.
- Reluctantly reached the conclusion that this was not an appropriate time to start a new service at Holy Spirit.
- Seeking part-time clergy to assist next year.

#### Associate's report (Oct–Nov)

- *Summary:*
  - Prison Chaplaincy Training site visit 19/10
  - Co-ordinate removal of wall gas heaters from St Andrew's
  - Preached at St Alban's Uniting Church 29/10
  - Prayer day 25/10
  - Attended 27/10 treats give-away at Holy Spirit
  - Youth outing Auscart 05/11
  - Funeral 06/11 at Holy Spirit
  - Fire Hydrant check 09/11
  - Fall / St John's worship in Upper Hall 12/11
- *Thanks:*
  - Youth outing at Auscart
  - Various interviews
  - Hume Grammar job!
- *Prayers:*
  - 2024 plans for my family
  - The move to the new home
- *Goals next month:*
  - Finishing well
- *Goals next quarter (Oct - Dec):*
  - Handover of responsibilities: Child safe, Covid

safe, Livestream, Youth Admin, Watsonia Re-vitalisation etc

- Report for 2022–23 in the APM booklet.

#### Wardens' report

##### • Heidelberg:

- Piece of masonry from top of one of the spires on bell tower found on ground. Peter Harper asked to investigate safety of spires. Warning notices put in place. On inspection, replacement of the one or removal of the other three requires a cherry-picker—cannot be done safely from inside the parapet of the tower.
- Banyule Council removed woody weeds Desert Ash and Buddleia from roadside near bridge: hopefully better vision of oncoming traffic.

##### • Rosanna:

- Various woodworkers removed pews.
- Stored padded pew backs, seats under church.
- Red chairs from Fellowship Hall sold.
- New South Sudanese congregation from Hoppers Crossing chose various items to use in their worship services and will return to collect some chairs and larger items when they have a suitable vehicle.
- Some kitchen items taken to op shop.
- Handyman has removed St Andrew's stained glass windows, tapestry, bell, and memorial book and box, brought to St John's. Tapestry installed in the office; the whole door with 'Jesus and children' stained glass window replaces the door to the children's room; memorial book and box installed in the church beside that of St John's.
- Pascal candle holder brought to St. John's, now in use.
- Various items taken to archives.
- Stations of the Cross plaques and Mary and Jesus carving re-homed at Anglican Church Hughesdale.
- Small altar table, wooden baptism font, prayer table and another table re-homed at Lowther Hall worship area.
- Meeting with estate agents, E&Y and Diocese representative: 23 information packs given out to those showing interest.
- Independent valuer sent on behalf of Diocese to value property.

- Report for 2022–23 in the APM booklet.

#### General business

- Discussion which projects should be prioritised if, as & when money from sale of Rosanna becomes available. Two high priority projects:
  - Upgrading toilets at both Watsonia, St John's
  - Providing cooling at Holy Spirit.
- Jonathan congratulated on obtaining a position at Hume Grammar, starting Jan 2024.
- Those retiring from Parish Council – Rosemary Bellair, Emmi Godau, Andrew Fegan, Mike Connor – thanked for valuable contributions.

*Minutes by Mike Connor, précis by Editor*

### Two Jokes

After the Advent church service, eight-year-old Lee said to the preacher: 'When I grow up, I'm going to give you some money.'

'Well, thank you', the preacher replied, 'but why?'

'Because my father says that you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had.'

\* \* \*

Jonathan, aged 10, wanted £100 very much and prayed for weeks but nothing happened.

So he decided to write God a letter asking for the £100. The Royal Mail received the letter addressed to God, United Kingdom and they decided to send it to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister was so impressed, touched and amused that he instructed his secretary to send the little boy a £5 note. He assumed this would be a lot of money to a little boy.

Jonathan was delighted with the £5 note and sat down to write a thank you letter to God, which read:

Dear God,

Thank you very much for sending the money, however, I noticed that for some reason you had to send it through Downing Street and the Government and, as usual, those crooks deducted £95.

<https://www.funny-jokes.com>