

BANYULE BABBLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF BANYULE

HOLY SPIRIT WATSONIA ❄️ ST ANDREW'S ROSANNA ❄️ ST JOHN'S HEIDELBERG

DECEMBER
2012

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ANDREW'S ADDI(C)TION

As Christians we get to end the year twice. First we finish our church calendar and start a fresh one in Advent. Then we get to end the normal year after Christmas at the end of December. Not being a liturgical expert I don't know if this is an intentional effect, but what it does for me is change my perspective on the New Year's celebrations. In our culture these tend to be a mixture of weariness for the year finished and rather manic hope for the year to come. I think that living already in the year to come, the Advent of Christ, is a more positive way to be. When 2013 comes we should already have our minds on the future and the promises of God.

For the past two years I have done these columns under the title 'Andrew Asseverates'. I hope that we have learned by now that to asseverate is to state something strongly and with conviction. Perhaps you could all start now thinking of a word starting with 'R' that has to do with writing or speaking so that René can have one that is easier to understand. My 'addiction' is a joke for anyone who managed to make it to the AGM. It is an appropriate title though as I enter into a period of withdrawal from the Parish of Banyule. It was good to see the consensus and unity at the AGM about how the parish is to proceed into the New Year, even though it means hard choices. I have seen a lot of change in my time here and hopefully I have helped bring some of it about in a positive way. I remain hopeful as I was when I started here that God has plans for this parish and the people in it, and we're looking forward to seeing what happens. But whatever happens, we live now not in anxious anticipation of the New Year but in the Advent which is coming now and the assurance that the Kingdom of God is near and is arriving among us right at this moment.

Andrew



Kids Hope is a World Vision program which operates in public primary schools throughout Australia.

Church members from a church (or group of churches in our case) work with at-risk children for one hour a week, building up caring relationships.

Our parish will be forming a team with Rosanna Baptist Church and West Heidelberg Uniting Church, operating in Charles La Trobe College in Waiora Rd., West Macleod.

For this program to operate, we require mentors, prayer partners and people who can support the program with donations of money, games, supplies for craft, cooking etc.

People who volunteer to become mentors will be interviewed by Philip and myself, and will need to attend a training day on January 24. Each mentor (at this stage I am aware of six interested persons) needs to have a prayer partner to prayerfully support him/her, and is an integral part of the program.

I will be speaking briefly about this program at each of the centres on the following dates:

Rosanna – December 2

Watsonia – December 8

Heidelberg – December 9

In the meantime, if you have any clarifications or questions about the program, do not hesitate to contact me on 9459 8638.

Judy Thomson



Christmas Services

Sat 15th Dec 7 pm – 9 pm Carols in the Park, Heidelberg Gardens

Sun 23rd Dec 10 am Advent 4 Combined Service at Rosanna

Mon 24th Dec 5 pm Heidelberg (Children's service)

Mon 24th Dec 11.30 pm (with carols at 11.00 pm) Heidelberg

Tues 25th Dec 10 am Heidelberg

Tues 25th Dec 10 am Watsonia

No service at Rosanna

Then we'll have one service in the parish each week over January at 10 am Sunday:

30th Dec Rosanna

6th Jan Watsonia

13th Jan Heidelberg

20th Jan Rosanna

27th Jan Watsonia

3rd Feb Heidelberg: *Commencement service for the year*

To Our Unsung Veggies

At our Annual General Meeting last Sunday the Wardens thanked the volunteers of our Parish. This article is for those who were unable to come to our Meeting, and also to emphasise our gratitude. Our Parish, and of course the Church generally, could not survive without all our wonderful volunteers. There are those who help with the running of our services, who make morning tea, do the flowers, the brass and linen, the mainly music helpers, the op shop workers, those who keep the gardens looking good. We also have people who do the banking, help in the working bees, assist the treasurer, organise rosters, edit and publish our *Babble*, and so many more, too many to mention. You are so important to the life of the Parish, so next time you bring a plate of food for morning tea, or stay behind to help stack the chairs, please know that we are aware of all your efforts and are very grateful to you all. THANK YOU!

Wardens & Vestry (via Gay Miller)

This Month – December

Tuesday 4th: 9.30 am mainly music Christmas session at St Andrew's

Wednesday 5th: 9.30 am mainly music Christmas session at St John's

Thursday 6th: 9.30 am mainly music Christmas session at Holy Spirit

Sunday 9th: 12 noon Family BBQ at St John's

Saturday 15th: 7–9 pm Carols in the Park, Heidelberg Gardens

Sunday 23rd: Combined Service at St Andrew's

Monday 24th: 5 pm Children's Christmas Service at St John's; 11 pm Carols, 11.30 pm Midnight Service at St John's

Tuesday 25th: 10 am Christmas Services at St John's and Holy Spirit

Sunday 30th: 10 am St Andrew's for whole parish

Next Month – January

Sunday 6th: 10 am Holy Spirit for whole parish

Sunday 13th: 10 am St John's for whole parish; Andrew Bowles' last service; baptism of Ethan

Sunday 20th: 10 am St Andrew's for whole parish; René starts

Thursday 24th: Kids' Hope training day

Sunday 27th: 10 am Holy Spirit for whole parish

Wanted

- New volunteers for the Macleod Op Shop

A note of sincere thanks regarding the Parish Fair

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to all those in the Parish for their inspired commitment and incredibly hard work in making the Parish Fair a resounding success again.

I would personally like to thank the committee in particular for their devotion over the six months or more in the planning and organising of the stalls. I won't single out anyone in particular; as everyone in the Parish, including the committee, made this event possible, immensely enjoyable and successful.

You will probably be aware we made a profit of \$6,763.80 this year.

The pure joy for me was to again see a day where we were all happy in service and fellowship, blessed by God and His loving Spirit to truly enjoy being a combined people of God reaching out to our community as a Parish who are joyous to be together and serving our Lord Jesus Christ. We were the Anglican Parish of Banyule, not three centres of worship. One people, One Church and One God.

May His blessings continue to enrich each and every one of your lives, as you have through His Grace enriched and blessed my life.

It has been an honour, privilege and humbling joy to serve with you all. THANK YOU, and all praise to our Lord. God bless you all!

Rod Harris, Chairperson, on behalf on the Parish Fair Committee

St John's Working Bee

On 27th October a small but hardy band descended on St John's determined to do something useful. The Vicar applied himself with power tools to refractory doors to make them open properly. Others of us carted and shovelled gravel about in attempts to fill in holes in the car park. I was reminded of the Slough of Despond in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which swallowed up twenty thousand cartloads of material without making any difference.

After we had used up all the gravel, it was off to the St John's Drive Drain, there to dig stuff out of the hole instead of putting it in.

The iron gratings yielded with great reluctance to our leverings and hammerings. Some of the party decided to dig what in archaeological circles is known as a 'test pit', and discovered deep under the earth another iron grating. Feverishly it was lifted, and digging continued. Would we find a chest of diamonds, rubies and gold doubloons? Would we find a hidden tomb containing the bones of the first Vicar? No, we found the drain sump and its efferent pipe, which were unblocked as far as possible. We were able to go home with the happy thought that now when it rained the water would back up from a blockage further along in the system than previously.

Peter McKay



To Mary

Virgin Mary – God's own choice to bear His only Son.
Gentle maiden – good and pure His favour you had won.

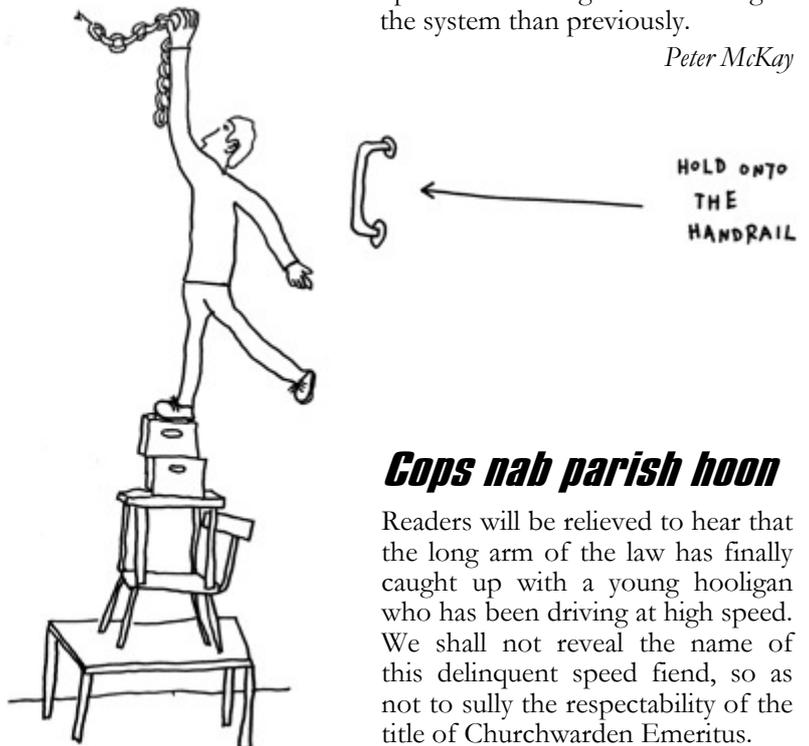
You would have been in fearsome awe when the angel from above appeared to tell you of the news that you had found God's love.

You must have been so very proud when you held the Holy Child.
You were so very strong in faith but yet appeared so mild.

Christmas time will soon be here and so, with one accord let us give thanks for Mary – the mother of Our Lord.

Betty Kettle

IF YOU ARE PUTTING UP DECORATIONS MAKE SURE THAT YOU DO IT IN A SAFE MANNER



St Andrew's Mission Boxes

Leprosy	\$528.95
CMS	660.00
BCA	672.95
Total:	1861.30

Thank you all!

June Lockhart

Cops nab parish hoon

Readers will be relieved to hear that the long arm of the law has finally caught up with a young hooligan who has been driving at high speed. We shall not reveal the name of this delinquent speed fiend, so as not to sully the respectability of the title of Churchwarden Emeritus.

'Allo 'Allo! It's René!



Our new curate, René Pfitzner, is moving into the parish as this month's *Babble* comes out, though he won't be officially starting until 20th January. If you see him, introduce yourself!

Note the acute accent on René, which it is of course bad manners to omit. The letter combination 'Pf' will be familiar to those who like *Pfeffermüsse*; it is pronounced exactly as spelt.

In 2011 René was curate in St John's Cranbourne after studying a Bachelor of Ministry and Theology at Ridley College Melbourne and at Moore College Sydney. He also has studied graphic design at Swinburne and worked for Walt Disney animation. He is married to Louisa, who is a deacon. They have two young boys, Tobias (5) and Bruce (2). René has a passion for teaching the word of God, as well as seeing how the Scriptures can be brought to impact everyday living. As a cartoonist, he has made comic books and animation illustrating Christian themes and Bible stories. René has just been ordained a priest in November.



A completely different René



The 2012 AGM

I counted 65 people present, not including Ethan Bowles.

After the usual formalities, during which some deficiencies in the Editor's minute-taking were pointed out, we went straight into the money. Philip said, in the name of the whole parish, that Geoff Murphy had done a fantastic job as Treasurer. Geoff replied that his assistants Sally Porter and Pat Lambert deserved this accolade. Unfortunately Pat is leaving.

Geoff spoke to the financial report for the year. We got more rent because we get a higher rent now for the Watsonia carpark, and we got two years' increase in one year from Banyule Council. Philip commented that it is amazing that, though our numbers have decreased and most of us are on fixed incomes, giving is up.

There was a deficit for the year of \$15,333. We took \$20,000 out of the Curacy fund to cover this.

Our budget for next year has to be in the black because of our loan to cover the difference between the new vicarage near St John's that we have bought and the old one in Viewbank we have sold. We are achieving this by reducing the number of paid clergy to two.

Andrew spoke of all the learning and experience he had acquired with us, including his new 'addiction', who will be baptised at his last service with us in January. He recalled that in his first *Babble* front page (March 2011) he spoke of Christian freedom "knowing Jesus will set us free from things that bind us", and he hoped that he had helped us achieve that.

The churchwardens then reported, particularly mentioning the new vicarage, which was opened for inspection after the meeting.

Philip then presented his report, and proposals for 2013. He stressed our six parish goals, and summarised a response to them:

- THE NEXT GENERATION*.....mm, Family Services, find new forms for meeting
- A LOVING COMMUNITY*Build up more small groups
- INSPIRING WORSHIP*Varied styles, a systematic teaching programme
- GOOD STEWARDS*Clergy in houses, Rosanna 2015 planning
- SERVING OTHERS*Kids' Hope, ecumenical cooperation
- PASSING ON THE GOOD NEWS*.....mm, Public events, marriage prep, baptism prep.

Philip stressed the need to use the Rosanna site in a more productive way for the work of the church, and said that we cannot keep Rosanna as at present for much longer.

The biggest proposed change for 2013 was the pattern of services (see below). Philip proposed a scheme that would see a parish combined service—Communion with full traditional ceremony—at Heidelberg on the third Sunday of every month, and also usually on any fifth Sunday, except that there would be one a year at Rosanna and one at Watsonia.

Watsonia would on other weeks have a Sunday evening Communion, with an emphasis in the sermons on systematic Biblical teaching. Though other services would include sermons, Philip hoped that parishioners looking for systematic teaching would come on Sunday evenings even if they also went to church in the morning.

Rosanna would have an 8 am service without hymns on the first Sunday of the month, and 10 am with hymns on the second and fourth Sundays. Heidelberg would be the only centre with a service every week; the first Sunday would be a family service with baptisms.

Mid-week services were proposed to be held in nursing homes; Philip hoped that parish members would attend and talk to residents after the service.

There was considerable discussion of these proposals, but they were then voted for without dissent.

The current churchwardens (Crystal Dunn, Gay Miller and Allan Way) were voted back in. Vestry however contains new faces—Peter Andrews and Rhonda Taylor—plus old lags Rosemary Bellair, Laurel, Marion Edmonds, Mavis Lean and Peter McKay.

The Incumbency Committee contains the same lay members: Robin Miller, Judy Thomson and Allan Way. Philip thanked them for their ongoing support as he bared his soul to them.

Heather Connor moved a vote of thanks to Philip and the rest of the team for bearing up so well under difficult and stressful conditions, which was approved by all. Everyone then tried to finish the remains of the morning tea but it had already been largely eaten by the Editor.

	HEIDELBERG	ROSANNA	WATSONIA – Systematic teaching
1ST SUNDAY	10 am Family service + baptisms (hall or church)	8 am HC 2 nd Order, no hymns	6 pm Sunday Fellowship meal with HC
2ND SUNDAY	10 am Holy Communion	10 am HC 2 nd Order	6 pm Sunday at HC
3RD SUNDAY	10 am COMBINED HC , traditional ceremony	At Heidelberg	At Heidelberg
4TH SUNDAY	10 am Holy Communion	10 am HC 2 nd Order	6 pm Sunday at HC
5TH SUNDAY	10 am COMBINED HC	At Heidelberg	At Heidelberg

War on Christmas? Sign This Minister Up

<http://www.thegodarticle.com/7/post/2011/11/war-on-christmas-sign-this-minister-up.html>

I thought this article, published on 30th November last year, might be of interest. Some background:

- *US politics is now very polarised between right and left.*
- *Unlike the situation in Australia and the UK, Christianity is still socially dominant, especially in the conservative heartlands. (The writer lives in North Carolina.)*
- *Christianity in the US is strongly associated with right-wing politics. Many conservatives consider the left to be actively anti-Christian and evil.*
- *In particular, pressure from the left for enforcement of the Constitutional separation of church and state, so banning Nativity scenes from government schools and offices, and the use of 'Happy Holidays' as a secular seasonal greeting (equivalent I suppose to our less contentious 'Season's Greetings'), has led conservatives to describe the situation as 'War on Christmas'.*

Ah.... I LOVE this time of the year!

Some people wait with bated breath for duck season, some for deer season, but for me it is all about Christmas season. That's right I'm one of those lefty liberals that have declared a War on Christmas. That's right! Sign me up for the War on Christmas! ... but maybe not for the reasons you might imagine.

You see, while I am signing up to help in a War on Christmas, I'm not on, what by default gets called, the "non-Christian" side. I'm also not signing up for the side that news pundits falsely purport as the "Christian" side. If anything, I'd make the argument that the dominant face of Christianity, as it is seen on television and promoted through news programming, is itself far from what Christianity is supposed to be about. It is a sort-of white-washed, sanitized version of Christianity that every year presents an increasingly cleaned up version of the Christmas story to the viewing public.

You see, the baby we remember this time of year was not part of the dominant culture the way the religion he started now is. The religious stories that were told in those days were told under the shadow of the dominant culture. They were stories of oppression and hardships, stories of overcoming unthinkable odds, stories of hope for a people living in times and cultural positions that – well, quite frankly felt hopeless.

But today, our stories are told from places and positions of power. Today, Christianity is the dominant culture. So, instead of a story of an olive-skinned middle-eastern, unwed, pregnant mother, who was seen as little more than property, giving birth to what the world would surely see as an illegitimate child who was wrapped in what rags they could find and placed in a smelly, flea-infested feeding trough in the midst of a dark musky-smelling animal stall... instead of that story, we end up with a clean, white-skinned European woman giving birth to a glowing baby wrapped in impossibly white swaddling clothes and laid to rest in a manger that looks more like a crib than a trough, in the

midst of a barn that is more kept and clean than many of our houses.

So, "War on Christmas?," sure sign me up. I'm pretty sure I'd prefer the elimination of what our modern "celebration" has become to the increasingly white-washed version we hear every year.

The Christmas story has been hijacked by a dominant culture. Places of power and positions of prestige have warped the comeuppance sensibilities of the original Christmas story. God's vision of liberating the oppressed, the downtrodden, has been slowly replaced year after year with a story that no longer brings fear to the Powers that Be, but rather supports the big business agendas of profit and mass consumerism.

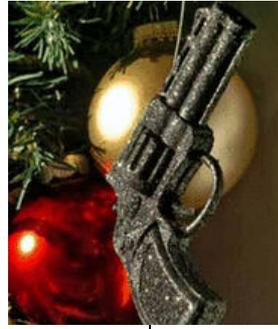
"War on Christmas?" – come to think of it – they're right. There is a "War on Christmas," but it is actually waged by many of the very people who think Christmas is getting squeezed out of our culture in the name of plurality and other religions. If the Christmas they support wins – well, I for one, would have to say all is lost. So, yes, there is a "War on Christmas" and we Christians have been supporting it. If the present day, white-washed version of Christmas continues to be the dominant version, then I believe a great darkness will smother us in a sea of privilege and perverse oblivion to the struggle of those most in need – the oppressed, the downtrodden.

If the Christmas Present, with its full on worship of consumerism, continues to masquerade as Christmas Past, our Christmas Futures will increasingly become a time when we give out of our abundance rather than out of a response to need and out of a response to God's love – the kind of Christmas where we give to those who already have abundantly while the oppressed, the downtrodden, watch our overindulgence and rightfully judge us by actions that run contrary to our words of a child born to bring light into the dark corners of the world.

Isaiah 9:2 – "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined." That should be the dominant message of the Christmas narrative. Is it? Does the way we celebrate Christmas bring light into the darkness? Does it bring hope to the hopeless? Does our modern day Christmas celebration bring justice to those who have been treated unjustly?

If your answer is "no" then, whether you knew it or not, you too believe that the Christmas Past has been white-washed by the Christmas Present.

During this season, as we remember not only the birth of the light of the world, a child sent to enlighten the darkness, we also remember his words, "No greater love has anyone than this, that they lay down their life for a friend." As we remember the



humble, unassuming way he came into this world, let us not forget that he left this world among thieves, an outsider hanging on a cross in an attempt to teach us something about God's love.

A child born in a manger, no crib for his head – sent into this world to teach us something about the value of every human soul – sent in as the

least-of-these, born to a poor woman in a borrowed animal stall – sent to teach us that "the least-of-these" is simply a human construct created by the insiders to define themselves over and against people they see as somehow less than themselves – sent to show us what a life looks like when it starts from the assumption that all people are worthy of God's love.

This Christmas I wish for you and for me light in the darkness of the Christmas Present. I wish for us enlightenment from God – an enlightenment that helps us see clearly the love for all people that lay in a manger some 2000 years ago – an enlightenment that encourages us to be the light to those trapped in the darkness of hunger, homelessness, oppression, poverty and war – an enlightenment that allows us to see we too have darkness in our lives – an enlightenment that helps us see beyond the cleaned up Christmas of the present to the humble, unassuming beginnings of our religion – a baby King, born to an outsider – born to save the world from darkness.

War on Christmas? A war on what Christmas has become? A war on worshiping consumerism in the sacred halls of Target and Best Buy while the world is swallowed up in the darkness of not having enough food to eat, a place to live, clean water to drink, access to reasonable health care? Sign me up, because I refuse to let the story of my faith be co-opted by corporations who only wish to convince us that we are privileged and we do deserve what we have more than others and we should revel in our abundance...even as we celebrate the birth of the child who laid in a feeding trough, who lived his life with no place to lay his head, who told us that "just as you do it unto the least of these so to you do it unto me"... who gave up his very life that we might understand what true love looks like.

War on Christmas? Indeed. Where do I sign up?

Rev. Mark Sandlin



Clean and Unclean

Deuteronomy 14:1-21 & Acts 10:1-16

St. John's, Heidelberg, 12/08/12

This is one of those passages from the Old Testament that people quote when they want to show how silly and absurd it is to read and take any guidance from the Old Testament. And for us, to be concerned with whether or not you should eat rock-badgers seems obviously absurd.

But today I'm going to think with you about what the dietary laws in Deuteronomy are really about, and what light they shed on how to live as a Christian. Can we find a meaning to this list of prohibited animals? If you've been to this service in the past few weeks you'll know that we're focussing in our sermons on the book of Deuteronomy. My overall argument is that we can draw on this ancient book of the law as part of our guidance for understanding what it means to live ethically as a Christian.

What are the dietary laws of the Old Testament about? Basically, what they do is set out some visible practices that mark out the nation of Israel as being about holiness. This is clear from the first few verses of the passage today. Moses says 'For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; it is you the Lord has chosen out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. You shall not eat any abhorrent thing'. So the purpose of Israel as a nation who have been led out of slavery in Egypt is to be a symbol of the holiness of God among the nations around them. And part of that is that they don't eat any unclean things. There is supposed to be a purity about what enters into them, the things they consume.

The point isn't really the specific things that you can or can't eat. As far as I can find out, no-one really knows anymore specifically why particular animals are considered unclean and others clean. Some ideas are that unclean animals are often those that are used in rituals for pagan gods. Some of them are perhaps considered unhygienic, and others are scavengers and predators who eat other animals and therefore are mixed up with the consumption of blood and other things. And the idea of cooking a calf in its mother's milk is probably to do with mixing up things of life with things of death. This isn't really compelling for us.

What I think is going on is that in the culture of the time there was a pre-existing tradition and practices around the ceremonial clean-ness of particular animals. And so, in order to make themselves a distinctively clean and holy group of people, the Israelites need to decide that they are not going to eat anything that has a sense of un-cleanness about it. It might be analogous to saying that you want to become a vegan – not only are you going to avoid meat, you are going to avoid eating anything that comes from an animal in order to be particularly scrupulous about your ethical integrity.

So the point isn't whether or not you can eat a heron or a hoopoe or a rock-badger, but a decision that as a nation we're going to be known for holiness.

This helps us to think about the relationship between Deuteronomy and our passage from Acts. This is a well-known story about how the Apostle Peter was first led to take the gospel of Jesus to the Gentiles. He was asked to go and speak to a Roman centurion called Cornelius. And before he went he had a vision of a sheet coming down from heaven

with all sorts of unclean animals on it. There probably were rock-badgers and herons and all those things. And he was told to eat it, though he was very reluctant to. The voice tells him, 'what God has made clean, you must not call profane'. This is a message that he is supposed to go out among 'unclean' people and spread the good news.

The question with this is why, if God wanted the apostles to go out to the Gentiles, why he would have compiled this list of unclean animals in the first place. What has changed? I think what happens is that with Jesus the method changes by which the holiness of God's people is expressed. Deuteronomy is about one kind of holiness, a kind of 'drawing-in' holiness, removing yourself and distinguishing yourself from unholy things. It's an establishment of holiness within a boundary. In the New Testament, on the other hand, what you have is a 'going-out' holiness, a kind of missionary holiness, attempting to spread the knowledge of God and to bring cleanness to where there is uncleanness. And both of those things are needed. If you aren't holy in yourself, how can you be a holy person when you go out? And what good does it do, really, to be part of a self-absorbed holy group and never being part of what God is doing out in the world?

So the question for us with this part of Deuteronomy is obviously not which animals we should be eating. But as we see, it's not about our diet, it's about holiness. To be part of the people of God is to have a distinctive holiness, to stand apart from what is unclean. For Israel, the dietary laws were about resisting those things in the land of Canaan that by consuming them would make them unclean. And I think in terms of consumption there are so many things around us that are worth weighing up in terms of whether partaking of them is something that holy people would do. Christians talk a lot, probably too much, about sex and violence in the media. And there are lots of things of that kind that it would be better to turn our eyes away from. But like with the unclean animals, the point is not so much the specific things to avoid as to be concerned to avoid unclean-ness in general. Maybe it's better then, to consider also more subtle products of unholiness which meet us in ways that are not obvious. For instance, one of the things that concerns me is that if you habitually read the daily newspapers (either one) you will inevitably be fed a diet of conflict, division, hatred, and wilful misunderstanding. They are a daily encouragement to violate the ethic of love for God and for our neighbour. Being holy can mean standing aside and not being immersed in the un-cleanness of our culture in that respect. It can mean questioning the values of the stories that we like to tell ourselves about other people and groups in our society.

But again, as the Apostle Peter shows us, holiness is an active and involved presence in the world, to be a witness to God's holiness and share the good news of Jesus. This calls us to be positive members of the world and not shrink back from people who might be considered unclean. It's easy to stand behind holiness regulations because of fear and avoid contact with the world, but that is not the point of holiness.

I think the beauty of these passages, then, is that they get us coming and going. Are we actively resisting un-cleanness and unholiness from being into us? But also, are we going out as Jesus taught us, to be agents of God's loving holiness in the world?

Andrew Bowles

The W in Christmas

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on nonessential obligations – extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending. Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six year old. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's Winter Pageant.

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher. She assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation. All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then.

Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise. So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats.

As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as 'Christmas' I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer. So, when my son's class rose to sing, 'Christmas Love,' I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snow-caps upon their heads. Those in the front row centre stage held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing 'C is for Christmas,' a child would hold up the letter C. Then, 'H is for Happy,' and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, 'Christmas Love.'

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet, girl in the front row holding the letter M upside down – totally unaware her letter M appeared as a W.

The audience of 1st through 6th graders snickered at this little one's mistake. But she had no idea they were laughing at her, as she stood tall, proudly holding her W.

Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together. A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen.

In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

CHRIST WAS LOVE

And, I believe, He still is.

Candy Chand

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Submitted by Rosemary Bellair

Vestry Notes

Meeting of Tuesday 20th November 2012 at 7.30 pm

Request from tennis club re Sunday play and method of payment

- The request for members to play tennis on a Sunday was deferred until next year.
- It was moved that we accept their offer of \$1000 for 2012, and that we invoice them next year.

Senior Minister's Report

- Philip spoke to his proposals for 2013 resulting from the Congregational Surveys. Various points were raised about the proposed service cycle.
- It was accepted that no changes could be made without inflicting some pain and it was acknowledged that most of this pain would occur at Rosanna and Watsonia.
- It was suggested that the families seeking Baptism and Marriage should be encouraged to join the teams being set up.
- It was noted that the Banyule Festival, now known as the Kids' Arty Farty Fest (March 24th 2013 (Palm Sunday)), be given due consideration in time for the Parish to be represented.

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

Assistant Minister's Report

- Andrew noted that the December meeting would be his last Vestry meeting in the Parish. His last Sunday with us will be Sunday 13th January.

Finance Report

- Geoff tabled the proposed Budget for 2012–2013. This will be available with the annual report for 2011–2012.

Updates

- The Spring Fair on 17th November produced a great show of unity over the whole Parish and everyone worked together in harmony.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **M.U. Deanery Day:** It was reported that the lounge area at the back of St. Andrew's Church was very much appreciated by the M.U. members visiting from other churches.
- **Kids' Hope:** Vestry was told of this new outreach being started at Latrobe College (Prep–4) next year. Judy Thomson will speak to each of the three congregations to explain the program, seek support and donations.

Rosemary Bellair

Annual General Meeting Notes

Sunday 25th November 2012

Philip opened the meeting with prayer.

- The formal notice was read.
- The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Sunday 27th November 2011 were amended and received.
- Reception of the electoral roll of the church (or churches) of the Parish:* received as displayed.
- The audited accounts of the church wardens for the year ended 30 September 2012:* income from Giving, Rents, Op shops & Specified Missions was increased; expenses on Maintenance, Cleaning & Mowing were increased. Accounts for the year 2011–2012 were accepted.

Proposed Budget for the year 2012/13: Income affected by one less vicarage being let out and Watsonia car park rent (the council paid two years last year). Expenses increased due to an increased Diocesan Assessment and increased costs of Utilities. We are trying to reduce the cleaning and lawn-mowing and will not be paying rent on the Curate's accommodation.

The proposed Budget for 2012–13 was accepted.
- The election of auditors:* BK Managers were accepted as auditors.
- An annual report by the Assistant Minister:* Andrew said he had learned a lot from his time with us & had enjoyed his time here. He invited everyone to his last service on January 13th – also the baptism of Ethan.
- A report by the churchwardens on the fabric, goods & ornaments of the church (or churches) of the Parish and the vicarage and other buildings of the Parish:* Gay expressed thanks to the many people who assist in the daily workings of the parish. The plans for the church at Watsonia included an upgrade to the toilets. This has not been achieved and will be addressed by the new vestry. The Wardens' Report was accepted.

- An annual report by the Incumbent:* Philip emphasised that our Six Goals were still valid and should be kept in mind. Of prime importance were 'Reaching the Next Generation' and 'Passing on the Good News' (to the community).

Proposals for 2013 as set out were then considered. Philip acknowledged that there were some hard decisions re the Service cycle, but the aim was to have more unity. Watsonia was to have a teaching program in place.

Rhonda Murphy observed that our community EXPECTS a church to be open every week. It was AGREED BY ALL PRESENT here must be a PERMANENT sign at ALL centres stating the **times & places** of each service.

Question: Why not schedule the 5th Sunday combined services at Rosanna? **Answer:** The purpose is to give consistency to the Parish. The same could be asked of Watsonia.

Growth depends on visitors and while there were few at Rosanna and Watsonia there were more at Heidelberg. A number of families now attend at Heidelberg. Increasing the number of variations cycle greatly increased the complications.

Peter McKay observed that if we are going to proceed on this we will all have to remember which Sunday of the month it is. If we were to introduce any alternating cycle as well we would also have to remember which month it is. It was also noted that, while it is excellent that we have everything on our website, we must also PRINT the year's calendar. There are quite a number who have not internet access and more who do not use it in this way.

Max Coomer asked the cost of a locum. **Answer:** For one service \$100 plus travel costs, thus approx. \$130.

Rhonda Murphy repeated that signage re the service cycle MUST be improved.

Philip emphasised that we must be very careful with our money, and that what we want in 10 years and even 100 years is a 'lively Anglican presence in Banyule'.

Philip also proposed that those who attend the mid-week services, take the service to a Nursing Home and spend time afterwards chatting to the residents. He also outlined the proposal to create teams to help with the Baptism Classes and Marriage Preparation. The Baptism team could include families of those recently baptised.

Philip had been encouraged by seven more volunteers for the Kid's Hope program for which Judy Thomson is leading the Parish involvement.

Regarding the Rosanna site Philip commented that St Andrew's couldn't continue as at present for more than a couple of years longer.

Margaret Lee suggested that a team be formed to take Communion to the house-bound of the Parish.

The proposals for 2013 were adopted **UNANIMOUSLY**.

- 2013 Wardens:** Crystal Dunn, Allan Way and Gay Miller – as the Minister's appointment. **2013 Vestry:** Peter Andrews, Rosemary Bellair, Laurel, Marion Edmonds, Mavis Lean, Peter McKay, Rhonda Taylor.
- Parish Incumbency Committee:** Robin Miller, Judy Thomson, Allan Way
- Heather Connor** proposed a vote of thanks to Philip in particular, but also Andrew, not only for the meeting, but for all his work in running our rather difficult parish with its three congregations. **Carried with acclamation.**

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm.

Rosemary Bellair