

BANYULE BABBLE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF BANYULE

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

DECEMBER
2020

Office: 1 Burgundy Street Heidelberg 3084 ph. 9457 1144

Ministers: **Denise Nicholls** 0438 856 376
Helen McAlley 0447 372 972

Patrick Senn 0411 028 360

Internet: www.banyuleparish.org.au

email.banyuleparish@gmail.com

Editor (author of all unsigned articles): Peter McKay 9459 5852 petergmckay@hotmail.com

PATRICK'S PROCLAMATION

EARLY on this year since the plague arrived on our shores, Christmas became a focal point, a reference point in time. For many months, our federal politicians have spoken of getting all Australians overseas back home for Christmas. Our Premier continually justified Victoria's lockdown—and its various extensions—so that we can have a 'normal Christmas' as much as possible. As we endured through the long winter and both of the lockdowns, as we watched press conference after press conference of announcements, Christmas always was presented as the end goal, as the time of reference around which all our present toils and sorrows will ultimately give way.

What is striking is that the very first Christmas already is a reference point for us, although cosmic and universal in scope. Despite recent efforts to secularise time by replacing 'BC' ('Before Christ) and 'AD' ('Anno Domini' = 'The year of our Lord') with 'BCE' ('Before Current Era') and 'CE' ('Current Era'), the event of all events, the moment that separates old time from new time and point zero, is the birth of Christ, his first advent. It does not matter if someone is a Christian, an atheist, a Muslim, or simply indifferent to things divine; whenever someone acknowledges that this year is 2020, they implicitly confess that the birth of the Son of God has sanctified our time.

However, as we progress through December before arriving at Christmas, we must wander through the dark season of Advent first. Before the joy and celebration, there is repentance and fasting. Before we rejoice at the good news, we must pause and acknowledge the bad news. Unlike what we have done this year so far, looking forward to Christmas day, in Advent we look forward to the real day of reckoning, when all truly will be made right when Christ returns to establish his kingdom on earth. As we confess in the Nicene Creed: 'He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.'

Christmas Day this year will not undo the pain and suffering we have experienced this year. For many, it will intensify their sorrows as grandparents who have died of COVID-19 will be absent, and the unemployed will struggle financially. Advent commands us to pause. Rather than get caught up already now with the Christmas Day lunch we will have with our families (or not: if anything this year should teach us is that we have no control over tomorrow), it will be better for us to intensify our gaze at Jesus. We must acknowledge his imminent return, before we celebrate his birth. We must get ready for Jesus to return, before we get ready for Christmas.

Advent is good news for a hurting world. When Jesus returns, *all* the ills of this world will be made right. Broken relationships will be restored. The dead will be raised. Debts will be forgiven. Tears will be wiped away. Evil dominions will be overthrown and God's kingdom will be established. In light of this, we must examine our own lives, hearts, and relationships to ensure that we do not commit the 'works of darkness'. And we must do this ever mindful of God's gracious promises to us in Jesus Christ. No other biblical book brings God's warnings and promises together as powerfully as Isaiah. We will be reading Isaiah throughout December as Anglicans traditionally have, acknowledging the darkness in the world around us and within us, and allowing God's light to drive it away.

While our society already has begun the rush to Christmas Day, in church we pause and slow down. Before we look back to the birth of Christ, his first advent, we look forward to his second advent, when he returns in great triumph to renew the world and ultimately to undo the powers of sin, death, and evil.

The Book of Common Prayer collect for the first Sunday of Advent, usually prayed every day during this season, beautifully sums up what the next four weeks are all about:

"Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen."

Patrick

Working Bee!

❖❖ St John's garden ❖❖

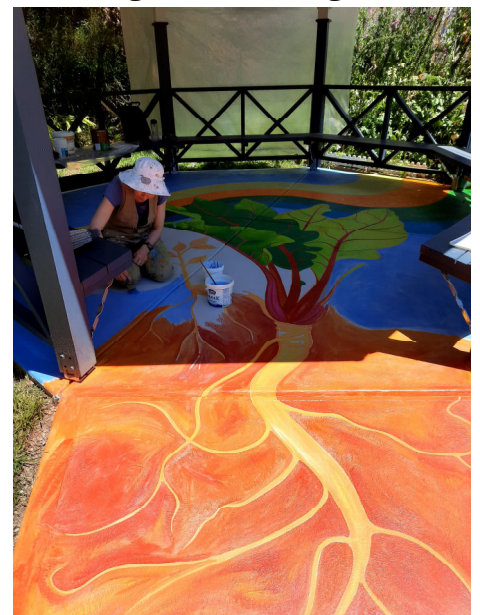
Morning of
Saturday 14th December!

From 8.30 am, or when you can get up

Denise will provide morning tea!

Bring gardening tools and yourself

The gazebo burgeons!



Local artist Felicity Gordon at work on her floor mural for the Community Garden gazebo.

Felicity's work has been sponsored by a grant from Banyule Council.

For another picture, see page 13.

This Month – December

Sunday 6th Advent 2: 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit; and online
Isaiah 5; Psalm 32; 2 Peter 3:1–14

Saturday 12th: Working bee in St John's garden

Sunday 13th Advent 3: 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit; and online
Isaiah 25; Psalm 30; 1 Timothy 1:12–17

Sunday 20th Advent 4: 9 am St Andrew's; 10.15 am St John's; 5 pm Holy Spirit; and online
Isaiah 32:1–18; Psalm 103; 2 Timothy 3:14–4:8

Thursday 24th Christmas Eve: 5 pm Children's service, St John's garden; 11 pm St John's (must book); 11 pm St Andrew's (must book)
Hebrews 1:1–12; John 1:1–14

Friday 25th Christmas Day: 9 am St Andrew's (must book); 10.15 am St John's (must book)
Hebrews 1:1–12; John 1:1–14

Sunday 27th Christmas 1 / St John
Song of Hannah; Luke 2:22–40

Wanted

- More churchwardens!

Money: October

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|--------------------|
| Income: | Giving: | \$9,848.03 |
| | Other: | \$24,204.27 |
| | Total: | \$34,052.30 |
| Expenses: | | \$22,373.23 |
| Surplus: | | \$11,679.07 |

Giving was up, thank you. Our income was boosted by JobKeeper money, and the last tranche of St John's car-parking money.

mainly music: December 2020

Jo's fortnightly sessions are going right up to Christmas! I think ours might stop the week before. That last week is no time to be thinking about *mainly music*.

We were fortunate to order the Christmas books early and collect them the first day it was possible to travel outside the 20km restrictions. By the beginning of November *mainly music* had run out!! The book they then promoted was one we have used before and some of our families have been attending long enough to remember!

With the relaxing of the restrictions we are now hopeful that we can organise some sort of outdoor "gathering" for the families to connect in person one last time. To present a session out of doors is too hard. I just hope we don't have a "third wave".

We have had sufficient interest from the families wishing to return to run two sessions – Wednesday at Heidelberg and Thursday at Watsonia – even allowing for "social distancing" in some form. What we need now is team members! Keep praying that the Lord will provide!!!

Rosemary Bellair (9459 5394)

P.S. I apologise. There is an error in the Annual Report – the penultimate paragraph should read: *We will not, now, have the personnel to run three sessions in 2021, but, with help from outside the parish, we hope to run sessions at Heidelberg and WATSONIA, as above.* — R.B.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Thursday 24th, Christmas Eve:

5 pm: Kids' Christmas at the St John's garden (BYO blanket)

11 pm: St John's Holy Communion (Denise)

11 pm: St Andrew's Holy Communion (Patrick)

Friday 25th, Christmas Day

9 am: St Andrew's Holy Communion (Patrick)

10:15 am: St John's Holy Communion (Denise)

Bookings are required, except for the Kids' Christmas Eve service. Email, phone, or sign up at centres.



St Andrew's Mothers' Union

After 72 years, the St Andrew's Rosanna branch of Mothers' Union is closing. Members are finding it too difficult to meet.

The next issue of the *Babble* will include an article on what this group has achieved over its many years.

Mothers' Union continues at Holy Spirit Watsonia.

Holy Spirit Mothers' Union

The November 25th meeting in the church was cancelled due to the coronavirus restrictions at the church. We are instead going to the Watsonia RSL for a MU Business Christmas lunch. The MU travelling suitcase came to my house, with most of our 2020 MU lectures, MU Diaries, MU Christmas cards, greetings cards, etc. (I can hand these out.)

Christmas cards for the remand centres this year will be sorted and packed in the homes of St Eanswythe's Altona MU and Young Wives' Group.

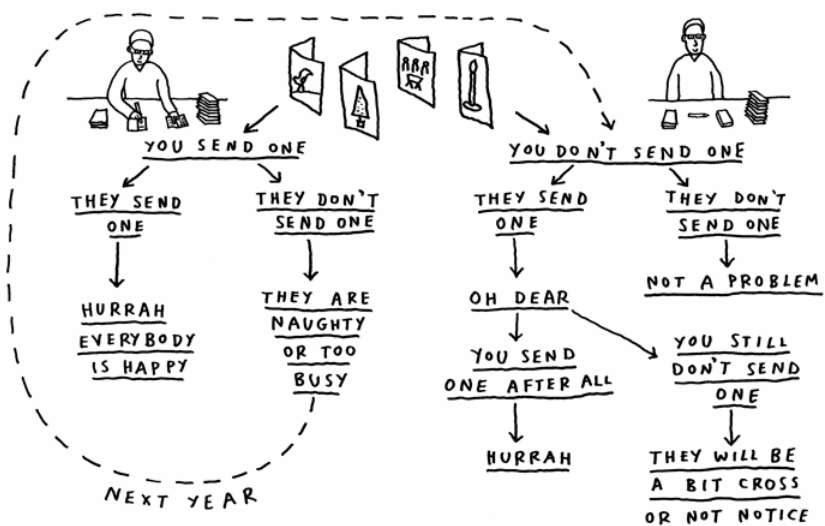
Midday Prayers:

North-western Deanery: St John's West Brunswick. Link Branches: St Mary's Broughty Ferry Scotland and St Peter's Kitwe. Families World Wide: Southern Malawi, Northern Uganda, Bendigo. Defence Anglican Chaplaincy: RAAF Specialist Reserve, chaplains in Sydney, Wollongong, Austin Hospital.

Holy Spirit MU's next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 24th 2021.

Elsie Storr

CHRISTMAS CARDS



Annual Parish Meeting 29th November 2020

With the new rules allowing plenty of people in St John's hall, the question most parishioners had in their minds was whether to go to the hall, or attend by Zoom. Attending at the hall gave the advantage of being more easily able to ask difficult questions (an advantage which some took care to avail themselves of). However, since the meeting started at 12 noon and would be of uncertain length, parishioners attending in person either had to lunch at morning tea time, which was uncouth, or make arrangements with cook for a very late Sunday dinner. On the other hand those who attended by Zoom could arrange to have their meal brought up to their studies by their maids and footmen, just out of camera shot (or they could turn the camera off).

In the event there were fourteen in the hall, and eight Zoomers.

The meeting started at 12.04 pm with prayer, and Denise commenting what strange times these were. The Zoomers silently agreed (being on Mute), and their butlers poured the preprandial sherries.

Your Editor had made the mistake of attending in person, and so was not only lacking sustenance, but was also in close collaring range when a Minute Secretary was required. Hence, even though it wasn't on the agenda, he was roped in and hog-tied, and left with the conundrum of how to minute his own discomfiture when it didn't fit in the numbered agenda categories.

The minutes of the last meeting were dealt with with dispatch, and the Zoomers started on their soup courses.

The electoral roll was received, though as it was a virtual roll there was nothing to actually give anyone, which non-plussed the Zoomers, as they buttered their own rolls. The Editor thought a symbolic scroll could have been handed to him, preferably a coffee scroll.

Denise now spoke. She did not get to her feet as she did so, as that would have left the Zoomers with only a view of her stomach, but nevertheless she commanded attention by the tone of her voice, amplified by a small PA system. It had been, she said, a strange year. She thanked everyone for their support and care, and thanked the Parish Council and wardens for their service; and especially our Treasurer Emmi, who had to cope with new (and very odd) diocesan JobKeeper arrangements, applying for grants, going back to full-time nursing, and getting a dose of COVID-19 while continuing to do the treasuring while feeling awful. For these amazing efforts she was given a floral tribute.

As the Zoomers moved to the fish course with a dry white, Denise thanked Patrick, and dropped a small bombshell. In 2021 we shall be partnering with an Anglican non-parochial congregation in Clifton Hill, led by the Rev'd Dr Peter Carolane, originally planted by St Hilary's Kew. (The old church of All Saints Clifton Hill was closed some time ago.) This congregation wants to plant a new congregation in Fairfield.

We shall be partnering with them by keeping Patrick on for another year, but sharing him with them. They will have him for one day a week and one Sunday a month. (They will pay us for this.) They will also help with our

mainly music, and we can help with the use of church space. Near the end of 2021 the new congregation in Fairfield will be planted, and Patrick will move to them full-time.

Patrick is very excited about this. He knows Peter Carolane (whom Denise described as "young and groovy", despite a "highfalutin" name) well, and has always wanted to work with him. There was also interested discussion among the hall attenders; the Zoomers were quiet, possibly because they were still on Mute, or possibly they had to give all their attention to avoiding the bones.

Denise referred to plans for redeveloping our under-used property. Ernst & Young had sent a report, but COVID-19 had changed the perspective, so it will be reviewed. Denise assured the parish that as plans develop, there will be transparency and members will be kept informed. She urged us to bring our eyes to where God is leading us.

In case the excitement was becoming too much, Judy Thomson told us about our new defibrillator ready to hand. She also said that the COVID procedures at this morning's service at St Andrew's had run like a well-oiled machine, which was because she did them all herself.

As the Zoomers progressed to terrines and other *entrées*, Peter McKay regrettably took the microphone, and wouldn't give it back for an interminable time. Firstly, he said, ticking the points off on his fingers, he wanted to thank Andrew Fegan, who had done all the real wardening for the year. He spoke incomprehensibly of the Vicar or alternatively the wardens being run over by buses, and where it would leave the parish, which led some parishioners to wonder how to obtain a bus driver's licence.

Secondly (he said), there was St John's, which started off with just louvre slats that needed replacing, and thanks to his wardening skills there was now an extremely long and expensive list of repairs needed that we cannot afford.

And thirdly, he droned on, there was the op shop. Readers will remember that last year under his watch the op shop had made less money than before, and had to be rescued by a card machine from the Brotherhood of St Lawrence. This year, even though the shop was closed most of the time, Peter has managed to lose a lot of volunteers, and though it will re-open on Monday 30th November, it will only be open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday mornings. Next year we hope to have an arrangement with the Brotherhood that will mean that the Brotherhood will pay us a commercial rent and take over the shop completely as a Brotherhood shop, running it entirely themselves, so we won't have to worry about it.

As the Zoom group refreshed their palates from the heaviness with sorbets or champagne, Denise warned the meeting that if they found all that difficult to understand, at the rehearsal on Saturday Peter spoke in bad late-fourteenth-century Middle English, so they should consider themselves lucky.

It was now time for the main course. As the Zoomers tucked into rack of lamb or suckling pig or haunch of venison with a nice Merlot, our Treasurer Emmi presented the accounts. It had been a difficult year. Nothing went as usual. We had managed to get Job-

Keeper money and some grants—though the ways the diocese managed the first, and the government handled the second, were arcane and unpredictable. The meeting thought she had dealt with it all marvellously.

Similarly, Emmi said, the budget had been challenging. If the wardens had not spent as much as expected in 2020 because they couldn't, there was no guarantee there wouldn't be an attempt to make up for it later. We were urged by the diocese to put Crystal's bequest in a particular ADF account, which promptly sank in value. Income was budgeted to fall \$73,739 short of expenditure.

Nevertheless, as the meeting could see no better alternative, the budget was adopted with no dissentient voice. Denise thanked Emmi and said that a deficit was challenging, but we should put God in first place, and money second. She said that if it got to the point that she and Patrick were not paid enough to eat, they would come round to parishioners' houses for meals. (The Zoomers ate more quickly.) She made this an offer parishioners couldn't refuse to make, threatening to bring Mabel, and pointing out what had happened to other parishioners who had got on the wrong side of her attack dog.

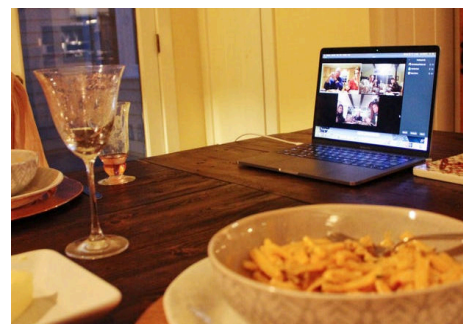
While the Zoomers hurriedly turned to their strawberries Romanoff or *crème brûlée*, the meeting quickly appointed some office-bearers. The egregious **Peter McKay** got reappointed churchwarden *faute de mieux*. Parish Council was filled with old lags **Chris Hall** and **Judy Thomson** and our much-esteemed Treasurer **Emmi Godau**, plus **Andrew Fegan**, who is retiring from wardening into a less full-time billet. But Parish Council now has a fresh face, welcoming **Jacqui Albanis**.

The Parish Incumbency Committee will be **Allan Way** and **Judy Thomson**, who will also be our Synod representatives, plus (regrettably) **Peter McKay**, because there was no alternative. Fortunately, the Vicar announced that she had no intention of being run over by a bus. The meeting also reappointed Bryce Hoffman as auditor, and Mike Connor said we were lucky to have him. Denise said he was especially good, because he didn't find any defalcations.

As the Zoom group finally finished with coffee, cognac and liqueurs, the APM decided on a Working Bee in St John's garden from 8.30 am on Saturday 12th December; and that the *Babble* will continue to run puzzles for a bit because there exists a parishioner who hopes to have a go at them some time; and Denise said, having reminded the parish of the ferocity of her dog, that it was a joy to be part of such a cohesive and happy parish.

And the meeting closed with the Grace, while the Zoomers raised their Benedictines.

The Editor





Blokes Helping Blokes on Zoom

The meeting on 8th November showed many of the blokes returning to some sort of more normal life. We discovered that Glenn was in his truck delivering a load of something to Lalor. He appeared not quite his usual self, but it turned out that that was because it was his wedding anniversary, for which he was congratulated. Allan mentioned that the day before had been his 55th wedding anniversary, for which he was congratulated also.

The Blokes also noted with astonishment that Allan has shaved off his ‘coronastache’, though it was not known if he had actually found a razor that could do the job, or had had to use a heavy-duty industrial whipper-snipper, or a blowtorch.

David Taylor had been let out of his cell on parole for the first time since 16th April, and found he had forgotten what it was like outside chokey. He and some other Blokes had used the opportunity to pay some visits to their medical staff to improve the staffs’ morale.

One of the Blokes was going to his son’s holiday house near Merrijig, which sounded like a good way to get the use of a holiday house without paying for one, but then it transpired it was actually the other way round, because he was going to work on it.

Stuart has gone back to the office, and found business improving a bit. Frank has seen his sons. Glenn was happy to be back in his ute, which held much sentimental value to him, especially the back seat; which led him into reminiscences that cannot be repeated here.

Glenn told us he was smoking, which however did not refer to the aforementioned back seat, nor to any psychoactive substances, but to his smoking of brisket by a method called ‘Texas offset’ or ‘Texas crutch’, which term carries to the Editor so many possible suggestions for development he cannot choose between them. Apparently this procedure turns brisket from a poor cut into something wonderful, in which Glenn said that all the muscle was turned to gelatine, giving a lovely image of carving a meat joint turned into quivering jelly, and reminding the Editor of what happens to his muscles when faced with a difficult task, or the wife.

Glenn passes any of his fence-posts that he doesn’t need for smoking on to Allan, who turns them into goblets for

drinking port, though in a size more resembling a bathroom washbasin. Glenn says the best thing to use for wood-turning (or was it smoking?) is a vaulting-horse, but they need to have legs, not the sort you hide inside to get out of Stalag Luft III, or to upset the count at children’s organised activities and thereby cause mayhem.

Frank told a joke, but as usual it cannot be repeated in these pages. Neil predicted that Richmond would win the AFL premiership in 2021, 2022 and 2023, but didn’t say whether he was accepting bets on it.

The Blokes agreed wholeheartedly with Glenn’s suggestion that the next meeting be an outdoor barbecue. It was decided that it would start at 8 am, as the Editor said that at that time he could have some clothes on. There were various suggestions of favourite foods to have—some, like brains, rarely seen on barbecues. Another Bloke likes kippers for breakfast; another, Moreton Bay bugs. Glenn’s favourite breakfast is baked beans eaten cold, straight from the tin; and he demonstrated this to the amazed Blokes, while still in his car. The Blokes who had seen *Blazing Saddles* were glad it was a Zoom meeting and they were not sharing the vehicle.

Somebody suggested that the food could all be puréed and mixed together, which led Allan to tell us that at one time he was eating all his food that way, after an operation on part of his plumbing. In the course of his description of the medical background behind the procedure, we learnt more about Allan’s lower oesophageal sphincter than we wished to know.

The next meeting will therefore be a barbecue at 8 am Saturday 5th December, at St Andrew’s, cnr Invermay Gve & Grandview Gve Rosanna. *Mr December* Len Edwards will be giving his ‘living eulogy’ in person! Let Glenn know you are coming (0487 852 808) so he can order sufficient supplies of baked beans.

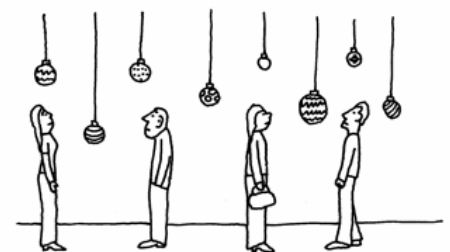
Peter McKay

P.S. Glenn told us that he had received an email from someone who had never attended a Zoom session but was helped nevertheless by reading about them.

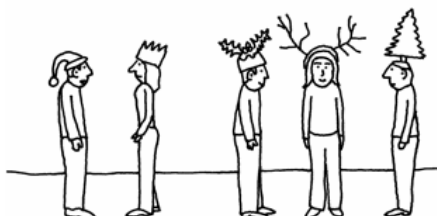
FESTIVALS



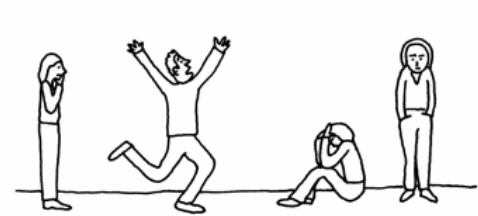
THE CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



THE BAUBLE FESTIVAL



THE FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS HATS



THE FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS STRESS AND ANXIETY

Carmel Vivian Forbes

30 March 1927 – 7 October 2020



The *Babble* regrets to record the passing of Carmel Forbes, a long-time member of St Andrew's, on 7th October 2020.

Her daughter Vivianne Blackbourn writes:

Carmel Wigg was born in Ballarat and grew up living at the Australian Beam Wireless Station, some 80 kms west of Melbourne, just south of Ballan, where her father was a maintenance engineer. He previously worked at the Telegraph Station at Cable Beach, Broome. This cable was laid in 1889 between Indonesia and Australia, completing the link between the UK and Australia. In 1927, the year Carmel was born, wireless transmission commenced in Ballan, connecting the Australian-England beam wireless service. The last transmission was in 1969. The CFA then took over the site.

Carmel met her future husband Vernon Forbes, in the mid 1940's when he came to work at the Station.

They moved to Rosanna 65 years ago making their home in Jolliffe Crescent and Carmel joined St Andrew's as a young mother of four children all of whom attended Sunday School, GFS and CEBS. She continued and enjoyed her involvement and contribution to the church, op shop, annual fêtes, Mothers' Union and the Mission of St James and St John. She was actively involved in church life from their arrival in Rosanna, still continuing to attend Mothers' Union until 2015. She made many friends. These were valuable friendships lasting decades, especially in times of need following the death of her husband in 1982 and their eldest daughter Athalie in 2000.

Carmel moved into care at Vasey RSL Ivanhoe in 2019 where she was looked after with great care and kindness.

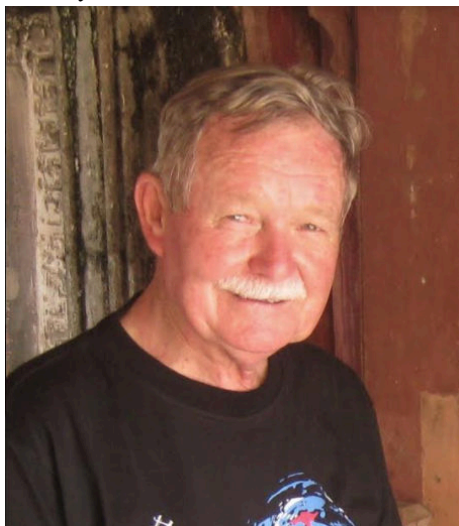
She and Vernon will be interred in the Rose Garden at the Ballan Cemetery.

Carmel is survived by her children Geoff, Vivianne and Claire and knew the joy of being 'granny' to 4 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

Editor's note: For more on beam wireless, see <http://bpadula.tripod.com/australiashortwave/id55.html>.

Malcolm James Deetlefs

16 August 1940 – 21 November 2020



Malcolm's funeral was held at St Andrew's on Friday 27th November. Malcolm's son Clive gave this eulogy:

Dear friends and family, thank you for attending today to remember, and to celebrate the life of Malcolm, my wonderful Dad, Husband of Tookie, Brother to Patricia, and Grandfather to Matthew and Timothy.

Malcolm's family story, as far as we know, started in the early 1700's in the village of Hennstedt in northern Germany near the border with Denmark. In 1752, his ancestor Johan Detlefs left the town reportedly due to hard times...but most likely because the weather was too cold..., and sailed on board the ship called the Hageveld from Amsterdam towards Cape Town, South Africa, seeking out a better life. Johan had been a German soldier, and apparently was a 'difficult' character, so he ended up being thrown off the boat when they reached Saldanha Bay just before arriving in Cape Town.

I know in my heart that this story of my dad's ancestor is true, as Malcolm retained many of Johan's traits...those of being someone who hated the cold, someone who loved an adventure, someone who would take risks to seek out a better life, and also sometimes being 'difficult'!

Malcolm was born in Springs, South Africa in August 1940 and his sister Patricia followed in November 1943. His childhood was disrupted by the 2nd World War with his father away fighting with the South African tank regiments in North Africa against the German General Rommel and his Afrika Korps.

Malcolm, therefore, grew up as an independent character well able to take care of himself. He loved motorbikes, sports cars, and slick haircuts, and I have always thought of him as a bit of a local 'James Dean' character at that time. In his early adult life he moved from South Africa to Northern Rhodesia, now known as Zambia, and became an apprentice instrument technician on the lead and copper mines. In true style, whilst there, Malcolm became quite a proficient amateur boxer and even came close to representing Northern Rhodesia at the Olympic Games.

Whilst in Northern Rhodesia, and in his early 20s, he met the prettiest girl in town, my mom, and I followed soon afterwards. His wanderlust then made him move again and take his young family back to South Africa. But this lasted only 1 year before he headed

north again to settle in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. And this is where he remained, a proud Rhodesian, until he moved again in 2011 to Australia.

During his time in Zimbabwe, Malcolm worked for many years as a sales manager marketing industrial mining equipment and security and telecommunication systems. However, in the later years of his working life he found his true calling as a farm manager growing vegetable crops, and managing the African wildlife on the property and doing safari tours for tourists. He was a man who just loved to be in the bush and climbing small rocky hills known as 'kopjes'.

Malcolm, following in the family military tradition, fought as an infantryman in the Rhodesian army during their Bush War from 1964 to 1979. He was involved in a large and deadly contact with the enemy in 1976 and took a bullet in his right arm. In his gritty style though, Malcolm continued to fight on, and after a long and running battle the relief troops finally came in and he was taken off to hospital. After recovering, he continued his military career in the Intelligence Corps.

Malcolm loved fishing and I have very fond memories of me and him in a small boat on a large local lake, called Inyankuni, catching magnificent black bass. He was also a huge cricket fan and followed the sport avidly throughout his life. He used to sit in front of the TV and watch every single televised Big Bash 20/20 game there was...and never get bored of it...quite incredible.

In 2011 he moved to Australia and began another chapter of his life, including starting his long fight against cancer. Unbeknown to him then, Malcolm already had historical family connections to Australia. His great uncle was the Reverend Joseph Kidger Tucker who had moved to Australia in 1861. In 1869, Reverend Tucker became the Archdeacon of Beechworth & Sale near Wangaratta, Victoria before eventually passing away in 1886 here in Melbourne. Also, the nephew of Reverend Joseph Tucker, the Reverend Gerard Kennedy Tucker, founded the famous charity called the Brotherhood of St Laurence in 1930 and earned an OBE in 1956.

So, it turned out that Malcolm had some famous links to Australia, and that is probably why he fitted in so well here, and came to truly love this country and its people.

Malcolm had an extremely positive nature and was always smiling, joking, and chatting to strangers. He made new friends at every corner...the neighbours, many of whom are here today, the local shopkeepers, fellow passengers at the bus stop, other patients sharing his medical ward, and even his favourite radio show host. Everyone loved him, and he was the life and soul of every party he attended.

Unfortunately, he finally succumbed to his cancer but he will always be remembered very fondly and will be loved by his wife Tookie, myself, and the rest of his family and friends.

What a legacy Malcolm left us, one of positivity, always doing his best, and enjoying what came his way despite the many hardships he faced.

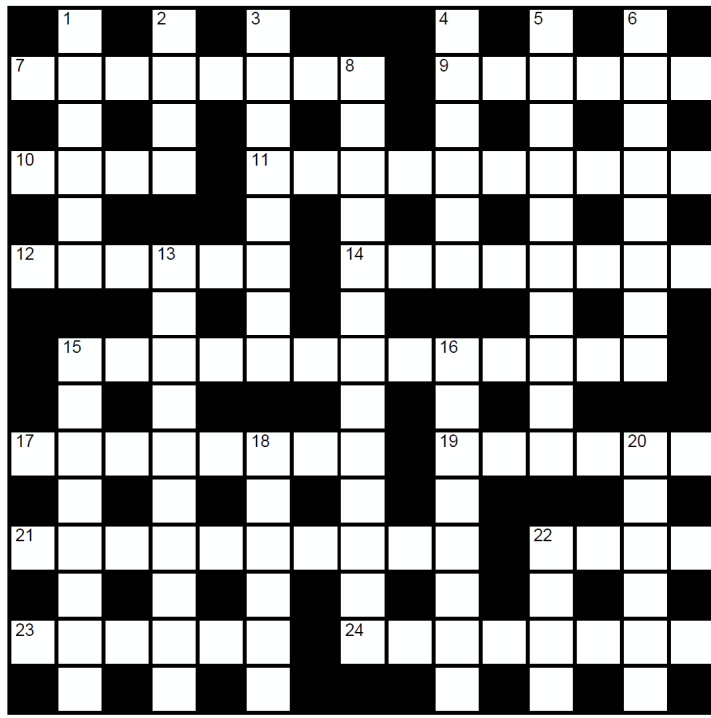
I invite each one of you to keep Malcolm alive in your hearts. We were all touched by his presence and we are better because of that.

Thank you for being here and for playing your part in making my dad's life so meaningful!

BIBLE CROSSWORD VIII

Across

- 7 Remembering Israel's deliverance from Egypt (8)
- 9 A mother who gave her son to the Lord in service (6)
- 10 Father (4)
- 11 Genealogically recorded (10)
- 12 Father of seven daughters (6)
- 14 Tether for a Hebrew mobile home (4-4)
- 15 It would help our understanding! (13)
- 17 Painful (8)
- 19 At peace (6)
- 21 Those who watch the world go by (10)
- 22 Siloam for example (4)
- 23 Reflect (6)
- 24 Adept (8)



by Philologus

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- 4 Selected (6)
- 5 What Jesus does for us (10)
- 6 How we should be if we trust God (8)
- 8 Goodness (13)
- 13 Gleaners (10)
- 15 Number of years taken to build the temple (5-3)
- 16 Jesus said the kings exercised it over them (8)
- 18 Hoarded riches are harmful to these people (6)
- 20 Time to go! (6)
- 22 Could be crossed or waved in celebration (4)

Down

- 1 They mocked Jesus (6)
- 2 Paul forbidden to preach here (4)
- 3 God will do this with our sins if we repent (8)

Answers to last month's puzzles:



Bible Word Search mystery answer:
CALL UPON ME

- Last month's anagram:
- ehiirt inherit
 - aaceekmprs peacemakers
 - cdefmoort comforted
 - aceehrt teacher
 - ceeijor rejoice
 - eeghinorssstu righteousness
 - abdeeisttu beatitudes
 - ceedprstu persecuted
 - ehopprst prophets
 - cefilmru merciful

Bible Word Search – Name Above All Names

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_NameAboveAllNames_0.htm

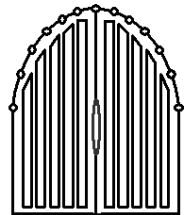
Y E L L A V E H T F O Y L I L
 L I G H T O F T H E W O R L D
 H T E R A Z A N F O S U S E J
 M A D A D N O C E S L K R K R
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 F D I V A D F O N O S I I H M
 M O O R G E D I R B R A N C H
 A N N A M E U R T E H T M G S
 R E G N A M E H T N I E B A B
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

Babe in the manger, Branch, Bridegroom, God with us, High priest, Horn of salvation, I Am, Immanuel, Jesus of Nazareth, Light of the world, Lily of the valley, Living bread, Living water, Master, Mediator, Messiah, Prophet, Redeemer, Savior, Second Adam, Servant, Shiloh, Son of David, Teacher, The true manna

Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

Heaven Anagram

www.dltk-bible.com



- eeforrv _____
- aagimnz _____
- aimnoss _____
- eeltvw _____
- aeglms _____
- ghilt _____
- cnorw _____
- aderrw _____
- hioprsww _____
- eersstt _____

'Scattered and Exiled' 4

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

25 October 2020

Isaiah 60:1–3, Revelation 21:1–8

by Patrick Senn

Introduction

Things do not always seem the way that they are, and change can come very quickly. Last month, after we had daily cases in the 40s and 30s, they finally went down to the 10s. On the 21st of September we had only 14 cases, and a smiling premier told us 'This is a good day'. In reality, on this very same day a cleaner, sick with the corona virus, went to work at a butcher in Chadstone. On this supposedly good day, a new cluster was started that led to over 40 infections so far, spreading all the way up to Kilmore and Shepparton. Things do not always seem the way that they are.

For six years in a row, Melbourne has been ranked as the most liveable city in the world. We boasted of the finest shopping, arts, food and culture in our city. From all over the world, international students were coming to study at some of our nation's best universities. Constant levels of migration to Melbourne meant we were on track to overtake Sydney as the most populated city in Australia. Yet, in less than a year, we have gone from the most liveable city to one of the most depressed and unemployed. In the last few months, there has been a sharp rise in access to mental health services in Victoria, and so many businesses are struggling.

For as long as we are scattered and exiled, and live under the curse of sin and death, even when things seem good they in fact can be very bad and take a quick turn for the worse. The last few weeks, God has shown to us that the problem runs deep. The current pandemic is but a manifestation of what is always there: The problem of evil, the curse of sin, forces of chaos at work in the world and in the human heart. The curse of sin will not be solved when we leave all restrictions, nor when we finally get a vaccine. This will not be solved when your preferred political party rises to power. This will only be solved when God Almighty once and for all intervenes to establish the new heavens and the new earth.

Arise, Shine; for your Light has come

In the covenant that God entered into with Israel in the wilderness, he warned them that if they become unfaithful and forsake him, they will be punished and exiled. Two weeks ago, we saw this warning become reality with the lament of Psalm 79, in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem. After this, the Jews lived in exile, under defeat, in lockdown. In the midst of these conditions, God rose up the holy prophet Isaiah to declare the message to a weary and tired people: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising." Despite the horrors that God's people have seen—their holy city destroyed, blood shed on the ground like water, and exiled as prisoners to a foreign country—God will not leave them abandoned

but will rescue them. He promises that his light will shine upon them.

This promise, along with all other of God's promises to Israel, have come true in Jesus. As we heard a few weeks ago, on him fell the punishment for sin, and the curses of the old covenant were done away with. Forgiveness of sins is possible, friendship with God is restored. But the final work of salvation is yet to be done. Just as Israel had to learn to lament and live in their exile in expectation of God's promises, so we also have to learn to live in anticipation of God's promises while we are scattered and exiled.

A New Heaven and a New Earth

While we are scattered and exiled, we do also have God's promise of rescue to us: God promises to us the new heavens and the new earth. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; ³ and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them;"

Through the sin of our first parents, we were scattered and exiled, cast away from the garden and fellowship with God. We still bear the brunt of the curse of sin today. But, in Jesus God has come close to us, and he has promised to restore us to full friendship with him like in the garden once more. In the end the heavenly city will come down to earth, and God will dwell with us, and we will dwell with him. Some of our wounds will not be healed in this life. This is why we have to learn to live in defeat and how to lament. But, one day God will wipe away our tears. "he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

Our final hope is not an end to this lockdown, having friends over to our house, and going back to restaurants; and, our final home is not in Melbourne nor any other most liveable city. As Christians, our final hope is in the new heavens and the new earth, the New Jerusalem.

Gathered and brought Home

Things don't always seem the way they are. We can finally have the lowest number of infections and a smiling premier tell us it is a good day, while at the same time another outbreak begins spreading far and wide. We can be in the most liveable city in the world, and quickly to the one must crushed by the corona virus. But the good news is, even in a world under the curse of sin where nothing is certain, God has promised a new one. Just as when things seem good, like on a good day with low case numbers, something bad is actually unfolding, so also when things actually seem evil and bleak God is actually at work behind the scenes. "He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Even when we cannot see it, God is at work and he will establish his kingdom.

As we are heading out of the lockdown, it will be tempting to look to the premier who has the power and authority to ease restrictions and impose lockdowns. But, as

we continue living in a world under the power of sin, we will be better off if we steadfastly look to the Lord who has the power of life and death, who makes all things new, who can take away even our deepest pain and wipe away all our tears.

AMEN.

All Saints Day

1 November 2020

by Denise Nicholls

Revelation 19:1–10

¹ After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants." ³ And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!" ⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!"

⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns."

⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.) ⁹ Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

¹⁰ At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."

At 3.15 pm on 26th October 2020, a collective shout went up over all of Melbourne, as we heard the premier announce the coming end to our 100-plus day lockdown. "Hallelujah!" I said.

There has been quite a bit of rejoicing of late, especially in the sporting realm. I was excited to see the Melbourne Vixens win at netball. Some of you might have been very happy to have seen Richmond take out the flag for the AFL. And again another Melbourne team, Melbourne Storm, took out the ARL grand final. When we're celebrating with our teams, it's usually happy for some of us, but sad for others of us; but when we do rejoice, we rejoice because something that has been longed for, waited for, and hoped for, has occurred.

Today as we celebrate All Saints, we join with the Church of God—the Church Militant as it's called: all Christians who are still on earth, waiting on earth to join with the Church Triumphant, those who have already passed into glory, and who are with God now. Today we recall, remember, and rejoice in the reign of our God, with our brothers and

sisters: all his saints. That is, all believers from every age, who are safe with God: those who are famous, whom we may know from words of scripture or from the history of the Church, and those who are personally known to us—or even unknown to us.

In Revelation 19, we read of the vision that was given to St John: a vision of comfort to God's people. Today we're going to look briefly at the passage, and then think about how we can be confident in God's reign, and his destiny for all his saints. So please do have open the scripture reading in front of you today from Revelation, chapter 19.

Hallelujah! A powerful word of praise and prayer. It's a little word of prayer: it means 'Praise God!' or 'Praise the Lord!' It occurs four times in this little section in Revelation chapter 19, and this is the only occurrence of the word in all of the New Testament. That's surprising, isn't it? Especially when so much of our Christian prayer, and liturgy, and the hymns that we sing, have that word of praise that Christians have appropriated for our worship of God. Hallelujah! Praise God! Praise the Lord!

Even in common parlance, when someone says, "Hallelujah!" often they are not invoking praise for our God, but it's a culmination of saying, "Finally, what we had longed for has happened!"

Let's have a look at the scene that John hears. Verses 1–3: the great multitude of heaven. It's clear in Revelation that we're led to understand that this multitude in heaven consists of angelic beings who serve God and do his will; but also saints of God in every age: patriarchs, prophets—as we've already spoken of and sung of in our hymns—people of every age who have loved and trusted and served God and who have died. They shout, "Hallelujah!" They praise God for his judgment.

Isn't it interesting: sometimes people like to make a division between the God of judgment, who they see as a God of the Old Testament, and a God of love, like Jesus in the New Testament. Scripture knows no such division. Here we have God's people praising God for his good and right and true judgments. It says "Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments"; and we hear that God has brought condemnation and punishment upon those who have not served him, but have gone against him. And so the people shout, "Hallelujah!"

In verses 4 & 5 there is the image of others present in heaven with God: the 24 elders representing God's people on earth, the four living creatures representing all of creation; and what are these beings doing? They too are worshipping God. They are worshipping God who is seated and ruling; and they, too, cry out, "Hallelujah! Praise God!"

Here we have a picture of the whole of creation in harmony and celebration of God and who he is. And then the voice comes from the throne: perhaps of God, certainly of God

and Jesus together—but there's overlapping as happens with Revelation in the images that are given—and the voice encourages this praise from all of God's people and all the company of heaven. As the voice from heaven says, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!" So all the people are praising God.

So too this instruction in verses 6–8. The multitude again come in, and shout, "Hallelujah! Praise God!" and then give reasons why. Have a look at verses 6 through to 8: "For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." They shout, "Hallelujah! Praise God!" for here is the culmination of what has been happening throughout all the earth and all time—the longed-for time of the wedding of the Lamb and his bride, the Church.

The people of God here are represented as in harmony, not only with the creation of God, but also with the voice of God, and in the presence of God, singing to God, "Hallelujah! Praise God!"

One of the guilty pleasures that I have been indulging in during this time of shut-down has been watching a few clips—quite a few actually—on YouTube of a series of television shows in Britain and in North America called 'Say Yes to the Dress'. It's about women who are seeking their perfect wedding dress. Whether they are older or young, whether they are fat or thin, short or tall, disabled or able-bodied, each of them is in search of what for them will be the perfect dress, the one that will show them in all their beauty to their husband, and to everybody else who witnesses their wedding. Great care is taken to make sure that the bride is presented in the way that shows her to be most beautiful. We know that for ourselves, don't we? When we are standing in a church or in any wedding, we're all waiting to see—maybe it's just the girls: I know *I'm* always waiting to see the dress! Patrick, did you see Beth's wedding dress before you married her? [Inaudible] No, and so were you excited to see what she was wearing? [Inaudible] He's nodding, yes, absolutely. We all turn and look, and usually people go: "Oh, she's beautiful! The dress is beautiful! She is beautiful!"

In John's vision, God's saints—his people—give glory to God, for the wedding of the Lamb is finally here, and the Lamb's bride—the Church—is beautifully arrayed in fine linen. Scripture here tells us that this garment, this fine linen, signifies the righteous acts of God's people. This is what beautifies the Church—not a dress, not how handsome or beautiful we are, but what beautifies the Church of God and makes her ready for her husband, the Lamb of God—Jesus—are the righteous acts of God's people.

But notice too, that these are not the work of themselves, but these too have been

given to them by God—gifted her by God. "Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." And that fine linen signifies the righteous acts of God's people.

One commentator that I read had this quote: "Throughout Revelation, the ruling power of God is never detached from the fate of his people. And the reign of God here in Revelation is expressed precisely in the unhindered union of Jesus with his people." A beautiful, intimate, picture.

In verses 9–10 the angel speaks to John. The angel said to him, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." Here we have the images layering one on top of the other, as the people of God are both the bride of Christ, but also guests invited to the wedding.

It's a beautiful image of the bride made beautiful for the Son. God's people—in heaven at that point, on earth now—but at the end time the Revelation pictures all God's people, all saints, at the wedding supper of the Lamb, standing before their bridegroom, Jesus.

Well how can we apply this to ourselves, knowing that Revelation is that beautiful genre—and sometimes confusing genre—of apocalyptic literature? What we see here, is that John tells us the Holy Spirit speaks to us, through the words of John's book of Revelation, the blessings of being the people of God. All God's people who follow the Lamb Jesus are his saints, are those invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb: those who are here today, those who will follow us tomorrow, but especially, today, as we think about All Saints, the saints of yesteryear—all those saints known and unknown. It's a great reminder for us of those whom we have loved, who have died in the faith of Christ, that they are there with us today, praising God. When we think about the saints who are often depicted in church stained-glass windows, and whom we're called upon to emulate in their love and service of the Lord Jesus, they too are worshipping God with us. And they are worshipping God now, as we worship him today; as we worship him every day.

So there is that collective shout and joy of the bride and groom today. We can rejoice in our teams, in our restrictions being lifted; but the rejoicing of serving God in heaven, of joining in praising him, we see from Scripture is loud; it is joyous; and it is directed towards God: his right judgments, his promised salvation, his healing and restoration of creation, and all that has been accomplished through the Lamb that was slain, the Lord Jesus. Yes, all of this has been accomplished by God himself. And so we as his people, blessed through being the people of God, rest in his grace. So we join today with all the saints in worshipping, and in shouting together, "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!" Amen.



Fra Angelico (or his workshop), altarpiece of the convent San Domenico at Fiesole

The Archbishop's Sermon

St John's, Heidelberg

23rd Sunday after Pentecost: 8 Nov 2020

Psalm 78:1-7, 1 Thess 4:9-18, Matt 25:1-13

by Archbishop Philip Freier

We gather today and enact the reality of our salvation through Christ in our Eucharist as countless others before us have done. We also gather to welcome Emmi Godau into the communicant membership of the Anglican Church. In other words, the salvation we celebrate through Christ has its corporate dimension in our 'communicant membership' of the church. We are declaring that we are truly members of the body of Christ and that Emmi can confidently know her place in this local expression of the universal Church.

I hope that today we are particularly reminded of our own commitment to faith on Christ. Wherever it happened or however long it has been, our baptism and our confirmation, as we recognise in Emmi's reception service, are foundational in our spiritual journey.

You may have heard me say that in each generation we need to communicate the good news of the Gospel into a new generation and across cultures. This involves many things but always involves personal engagement with people, knowing them and their story and linking that story to the big story of God's purposes for all creation through Christ.

I hope that today we are reminded of what the psalmist wrote millennia before:

5 He[God] established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children;

6 that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children, 7 so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;

Faith transmitted in all of its freshness to each generation and incorporation into the church, the body of Christ, is the theme for my words today. The Church is always renewing itself by adding new members if it is to be true to its calling and divine character. We know that every healthy human body needs to replace those parts of it that are sick and weak with new cells. This happens in our skin, our hair, our blood, our muscles – all parts of us. When any part of our body stops doing this, we become ill or weak and may soon die. The Church in one respect is no different: our members may be transferred away, leave for retirement, grow up and go to university, relocate to be married, die or even worse, stop growing in Christ and simply fade off the scene. Our local communities change over time, new people come to be our neighbours and each brings their culture, language and background to our daily interactions.

Unlike the human body which is conceived, born, lives and dies, the Church is called to a divine vocation until the Lord comes again. This is implicit in the affirmation we make in the Apostles Creed –

*"I believe in The Holy Spirit
The Holy Catholic Church
The communion of saints
The forgiveness of sins
The resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting".*

This Church should be a place where people can encounter God through his Spirit, experience the divine mission of the Body of Christ – God's Church throughout the world and transcending place and time. Where they can encounter people committed to holiness of life and living with the promise of eternity.

Matthew 25.13 speaks about the necessity for us to be alive as disciples of Christ. 'Keep awake', Jesus tells us, 'you know neither the day nor the hour'. Our human wisdom is always limited. It is only the wisdom of God in Jesus Christ that can take us beyond our limitations, to approach God in God's holiness. But we can stay awake, remain alert, continue as disciples, right throughout our life, no matter what. That is what we pray today for all who own their Christian faith in daily life.

I'm always struck how consistently Jesus expects a physical and not just mental response. Whether it is 'Follow me' to those who would be his disciples, or 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' to the blind beggar, or 'Sell everything you have' to the rich young ruler, or to Zaccheus 'come down from the tree', Jesus expects people to **do** something not just think something. Jesus forces this point when he asks his doubters, 'Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and take your mat and walk"?' (Mark 2.9)

The Book of Common Prayer has for centuries been the standard of worship for Anglicans for as long as we have been worshipping in the English rather than the Latin language. It is very physical in its requirements, and for good reason, because those who framed it understood these principles of living as a disciple of Christ. For instance, it required the parish clergy to go each morning and evening to the parish church, to ring the bell and invite the parishioners to join with them in praying Morning and Evening Prayer. That is a commitment and discipline to do something, to get up from all of the other important things that they could be doing and go to the place where prayer and the reading of the Bible is the only thing that is possible. This is a physical commitment it is not just thinking something but rather it is faith in action.

In my beginning years of ordained ministry as an ABM missionary at Kowanyama in Western Cape York Peninsula we didn't have a bell but each morning and evening I would go to the church and hit an old aeroplane propeller blade that hung from the limb of a Poinciana tree. It had been cut from a military plane that had made an emergency landing on the beach not so far to the north during the Second World War. The fact of this physical and not just mental requirement was for me a great discipline in prayer and built on the formation I had received in the chapel at St John's College in Morpeth.

Look too at the order in which the benefits of God's blessing are to be used in this prayer from the BCP:

'Increase the fruits of the earth by thy heavenly benediction; and grant that we, receiving thy bountiful liberality, may use the same to thy glory, the relief of those that are needy, and our own comfort...'

In other words our response to God's gifts should be towards God in the first place, responding to the needs of others secondly and then are own comfort when we have met the first two. If the advertising that constantly

clamours for our attention is anything to go by, our society tells us a different story, a story where the beginning and the end is about self-interest. I don't think that this line from a credit card advertisement is at all unusual:

'Get the spending flexibility and freedom you deserve in your life with our most prestigious card. Our Platinum Card provides you with immense flexibility and worldwide recognition.'

I don't think that we could get a better example of appealing to what the Prayer Book refers to as the 'covetous desires of the world', that very same we are called to renounce in baptism as well as in daily life.

Isn't it strange that something which really only gives us another way of spending money and building up a debt can be described in such attractive terms. Look at the order of its propositions. It **starts with self**. 'You deserve it' the ad says; and what's more it appeals to our vanity by offering prestige and a world of spending that will satisfy our every desire wherever we are in the world. Beginning with self and ending with self, this is the old and slippery path away from God and into the hands of all of the forces that conspire against us in this life.

We all know that it is easy to have all kinds of wonderful thoughts, but it requires effort, discipline and sacrifice to put even the weakest of our good thoughts into action. And this of course is what we must do. This is the distinction Jesus makes in John 13.17: *'If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.'* Jesus make a ringing call for action, for our complete following of him – this is the calling of the disciple, as much a call to a new way of life **for us** as it was for the fishermen of Galilee that called as his first disciples.

Being a Christian is primarily about being a disciple of Jesus and that means action: it means following and travelling though life with Jesus as a companion and guide. We might have the ideas of a Christian, but without the practice of our faith, not the life of a Christian. I fear that many have put themselves in spiritual peril by convincing themselves, through the attractive but false logic of human reason, that this is an option for them. I'm sure that you have heard people say that they are a Christian but to do not go to church. You may even have been such a person before you discovered the inherent contradictions of that proposition.

I would like to conclude with these words from John Wesley's covenant service:

*Christ has many services to be done:
some are easy, others are difficult;
some bring honour, others bring reproach;
some are suitable to our natural inclinations
and material interests,
others are contrary to both;
in some we may please Christ and please ourselves;
in others we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves.*

Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ,

who strengthens us.

Therefore let us make this covenant of God our own.

Let us give ourselves to him,

Trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

Trinity 23

15 November 2020

by Denise Nicholls

Matthew 24:36–51

³⁶ *“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”* ³⁷ *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.* ³⁸ *For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;* ³⁹ *and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.* ⁴⁰ *Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.* ⁴¹ *Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.*

⁴² *“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.”* ⁴³ *But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.* ⁴⁴ *So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*

⁴⁵ *“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?”* ⁴⁶ *It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.* ⁴⁷ *Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.* ⁴⁸ *But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’* ⁴⁹ *and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.* ⁵⁰ *The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.* ⁵¹ *He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Thanks, Patrick. Wasn't it great to have the Archbishop here last week and to lead us in worship? He was very positive about our parish and about being here, and it was just lovely to have him here.

Well, we are almost ready to open up again as a church. Parish Council and Patrick and I have talked, and we think that on the 29th of November—the first day of Advent—we will be able to meet together again, face to face. So we've been getting ready for that. You know what it is to be COVID-ready—we need our safety plans organised, we've got temperature guns, and hand sanitiser, and wipes, and spray, and crosses marked on the pews at St John's of where you can sit, and you know . . . So we're organised; we are ready.

But if we were to have a surprise visit from somebody? You know what that's like, when somebody just pops in, and you're not ready. Sometimes we think, 'Oh my goodness, if I'd have known you were coming I could have made myself ready'. Even a wonderful surprise can leave us feeling like, oh, gee, we're not quite ready.

The followers of Jesus are told in our passage today—we are told—be ready all the time for the coming of the Son of Man, for the return of Jesus. Be ready to meet with God

face to face every day by living out our faith in Jesus every day.

We're looking at the passage that Patrick read to us from Matthew chapter 24; but first, a little bit about the context, before I make two brief points. The context is: Jesus has already entered Jerusalem. We've had the wonderful triumphal entry. He's had already some altercations with the Pharisees and the religious leaders of the time. And so we are now in what is the last week of Jesus' life on earth. He knows that what is at hand is his betrayal; his desertion; his death.

So there's an urgency to his words, especially to his friends, about being ready—being ready for what was about to come upon them, but especially for the return of the Lord Jesus. He urges them to keep alert, to keep watch, to be prepared in their spiritual lives.

So first of all, Jesus says it will be a sudden appearance. You might have been to a surprise party, or have been lucky enough that somebody has thrown a surprise party for you. I've been the recipient of that, and it's a wonderful surprise. One of the first things I thought of was, 'Oh my goodness, I don't know if I'm correctly dressed for this party'—with all these people, here, looking at me, but the joy of seeing people who are known and loved; the excitement of a wonderful surprise. Or perhaps you've seen on YouTube or on television those wonderful moments where somebody has returned unexpectedly—the family was not expecting them to return, and the joy with which they are received! They're in shock, but they're joyful.

Jesus says about the return of the Son of Man (verse 36): *“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”* The coming of the Son of Man—the return of Jesus—that final day when God will call all people to account—we don't know when that will be; so Jesus says to his friends: Be watchful. Be ready. For there's no schedule, there's no time, there's no road map—as we've been talking about the road map of opening up after COVID. Not even the Son or the angels know, but only the Father in heaven knows when this will occur.

Of course through the years the church in its various branches has made predictions about when Jesus would return. Did you know that there was a thought in the early 1900s that Jesus would come into Sydney Harbour walking through the Heads? I was told as a teenager—well, we know that Jesus will be back before 1988, because that's 40 years, which is a Biblical number of a generation, and it will be after the founding of Israel in 1948. It didn't happen then. But the Christian church, and various leaders within it, have said from day dot, from the time Jesus left to go to heaven, predicting when Jesus would come: everything from 500 AD to 1000 AD to the year 2000, because some people think that those markings of time are very important to God if they're important to us.

I even read one that Jesus was supposed to return in July 2020 of this year: perhaps we were all in lockdown and didn't see it happen? No, of course not! This is why it's important for us to read and know our Bibles. When somebody tells us that they can figure out exactly from Scripture the day and date when the world will end, or the day and date when Jesus will return—well, to quote an Aussie classic, 'tell them they're dreaming'.

We need to know and read and understand our Bibles, because Jesus himself, our Lord, says no one knows about that day or hour: not the angels in heaven, not the Son, but only the Father. But what Jesus **does** say is that the coming of the Son of Man—that final day, the day when all will come to light, and all stand before God—it will be a day that is ordinary.

A day that is ordinary: and Jesus gives the example of Noah. Noah who was given a task to build that great big ark—and he took a very long time. And until he and his family entered the ark, it was an ordinary day for everybody else, till the rains began to pelt down. The ordinariness of their life is shown by the things that they were doing: eating; drinking; being married; being given in marriage: all these normal, everyday, life events.

So Jesus gives two examples of what it could be like: two workers in a field, and two women grinding grain. Here we see workers—men and women—doing very ordinary everyday things. And Jesus says one will be taken, and one left: the workers in the field, or the women grinding grain—one will be taken to be with God and enjoy the benefits of his Kingdom, and one: their choice of ignoring God and telling God to stay away will also be respected.

Jesus tells us that the coming of the Son of Man—his return as Judge—will be on a day that is ordinary, unexpected; but it will be decisive. And so that is why he says to his friends, keep watch, and be ready. Jesus, the Son of Man, will return for the end time judgment and that's why verses 42 & 44 are key to this passage. Verse 42 says *“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come”*. *“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”* So keep watch and be ready. And the sense of these words is present continuous: **keep being** on watch; **keep being** ready.

Jesus emphasises the importance of this by repetition; and between these two statements of being watchful and being ready is sandwiched the idea of a thief coming in to rob a house. Now I'm very fortunate in that I haven't been in a house that's been robbed; but many of us have, and we think, 'Well if we had known the time when the robber came, we wouldn't have gone out. We would have been able to protect what we had.'

Jesus here is emphasising the shock, the unexpectedness; and so people need to be prepared the whole time. We know that if we have a visitor hopping around, even if I've got five minutes, I'll do a couple of things—I'll grab that little quick stick vacuum and I'll do a quick whiz; I might clear off some of the plates and put them out in the sink; and I'll prepare my home, myself, ready for visitors.

But all of us already do some very ordinary things of preparation, don't we? Every week or fortnight we do the ordinary things of preparing by shopping for food, so that we are ready for meals; getting lunch boxes ready for the children; baking a slice for a neighbour; going on a trip—remember those? That's when we used to get out our luggage and pack them and go away for a little while. We prepare by getting organised; we pack, make sure we've got our tickets, our accommodation booked.

Jesus says, 'Be watchful and ready'; and for us that means: keep doing the ordinary

everyday things of life, but lived in the knowledge and love and service of God. So again Jesus gives his listeners two examples—well, an example of one person, but two different activities. He gives a contrasting model of a servant to their master, and the servant is called either 'faithful and wise' or 'wicked'. The servant is entrusted with a task, a pretty ordinary everyday task: give your fellow servants food at the proper time. And there is a delay in the master returning.

The servant is called 'faithful and wise' if, when the master comes back, the servant is just going about their task—doing the task which they were given. Jesus said, *it will be good for that servant*. You see, that servant has been ready for their master by obedience: by completing the tasks given to do.

But Jesus says the servant is described as 'wicked' if they see the delay as a reason to shirk their task, that they don't have to answer to the master. Jesus said, *that servant is wicked*; and a punishment is given to them, and they are shut out from his presence. You see this time the servant is not ready for the master, because of disobedience.

So Jesus tells his followers, 'Be watchful, be ready'; and that's his word to us today from the Scriptures. Are **we** ready to stand before our God at any time? For that could happen. Jesus could return at any time—or we might go to be with him—and we will have to give an account to our Master.

So how can we be ready? First of all, don't be fearful! We know that we stand in the grace of our Lord. We know that we have not needed to do anything to earn our place in God's heart, or in his family. But sometimes we might think, 'Gee, will Jesus think I'm a faithful servant, or a wicked servant—whether I'm in church, or at the footy cheering for my team? Or if I'm on holidays, will he be less pleased than if he finds me praying at home? No, we are in God's family through our faith and trust in Jesus. We give glory to Jesus, and every day, as his people, we live out the truth of whose we are—that we are in God's family.

For it's in the everyday things, the little things, it's living out our faith and trust in Jesus, every day, in every task that we do, in the ordinary things of life. It's having that attitude, that faith in God, that places God at the centre of our lives, and that everything else that we do in our lives centres around him. We receive all God's blessing that we do receive with praise and thankfulness, with

lives that are oriented towards God and his way, and not away from them.

Not perfectionism: we're not talking about that. Only Jesus was perfect, we know that. But it is knowing that our lives are in God's hands, and that every day is a gift from God.

So should we read the Bible and pray? Yes! Absolutely, every day! Because doing these things helps us to live in the light of God's presence and rule in our lives, every day. Reading God's word, praying to him, bringing before him the things that are on our heart, helps us to grow in our knowledge and love of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We're encouraged in Scripture to be watchful, be prepared, know that we will have to give an account one day before our Lord. But it's in the little everyday things: of knowing whose we are, of serving our God, that show our obedience to him.

In 1965 Curtis Mayfield wrote a beautiful little song, *People Get Ready*. Do you know that song? Do you know that song, Syd, *People Get Ready?* [Syd: I don't think so]:

*People get ready, there's a train a-comin'
You don't need no baggage, you just get on board
All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'
You don't need no ticket you just thank the Lord.*

It's living with hearts that are full and thankful to our God—knowing that we are his. The good and wise and faithful servant is the person who gets on with living their lives towards God, hearing from God's word, and walking in his way.

And friends, we do this only because God's Spirit has moved in us, and brought us to love and honour and follow him. We need not be scared. For we know that, as those who trust in the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we will be people who will be described as, 'Well done, good and faithful servants'. Amen.

'Stirred Up and Ready to Go'

The Sunday Next before Advent
22 November 2020

Jeremiah 32:5–8, John 6:5–14

by Patrick Senn

(delivered by Denise Nicholls)

Introduction

In May earlier this year, Time Magazine featured a story of Qi Xiaoyu, a 27-year old nurse from Shanghai, China. Qi Xiaoyu has visited Disneyland Shanghai over 200 times

since its opening in 2016. And now, after closing due to the pandemic she finally was able to visit the theme park again. Working on the frontline of the coronavirus pandemic, her mental health and well-being has suffered. At Disneyland, "everything is wonderful." "Disney is pure happiness and takes my mind all the pressure at work." Up until Disney's re-opening, her only respite has been dressing up at home in one of her 20-odd Disney princess costumes, in order to "escape the real world of death in her hospital".

Maybe like me you have noticed that Christmas has come early this year. Already at the start of November, Christmas decorations were up. Usually, it is the start of December (which already is way too early for my taste), but already for weeks in Ivanhoe, in Heidelberg, in the city, Christmas has come. Why so soon? Like Disneyland for the nurse from Shanghai, so Christmas this year is a way for people to escape the real world of death, lockdown, isolation, and struggle. When we were still in the lockdown, I heard on the radio a shop owner saying retail must open soon because people need Christmas, they need to go shopping, and they need it early this year.

Traditionally, this day is known as 'Stir up Sunday' based on the opening words of the collect "*Stir up*, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people". Why do we have to be stirred up? Why do we ask God to awaken us as if out of deep slumber? Because today is the last Sunday in our church calendar year, and we are approaching the serious time of Advent. As most of you know, every year I have been insisting that Advent is not a countdown to Christmas, but it is a season of fasting, repentance, and preparation for the return of Jesus in glory to destroy all evil and restore all things in heaven and earth. As we confess in the Apostle's Creed: "he will come to judge the living and the dead". All of our Christian life should look forward to this glorious day, and Advent is the time where we renew our expectations.

A Righteous Branch

This year we have seen rulers and leaders behave in many ways, often wickedly. Right now, Trump is refusing to accept defeat by lying and spreading misinformation. In Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko rigged an election and brutally stamped out rightful protests. Xi Jinping is breaching the human rights of the entire Uighur people by mass incarceration, indoctrination, forced labour and sterilisation. And in Brazil, the complete disregard of Jair Bolsonaro for the corona virus has led to over 165,000 deaths. Where rulers are evil, the people suffer. And this was exactly the same in Israel in Jeremiah's time. The kings led the nation into spiritual unfaithfulness, and this led Israel to be conquered by armies, and exiled to foreign nations.

In the midst of bleak circumstances, God declares: "*The days are coming ... when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.*" Last summer, we had the devastating bushfires, which left nothing but ash, destruction, and death in its path. Earlier this year, there was the news that suddenly new life and vegetation was springing forth. There were pictures of fresh leaves



thanks patrick it wasn't great to have the archbishop here last week

Denise speaks her mind in the YouTube captions

and branches sprouting forth out of seemingly dead tree stumps. In a landscape of wicked leaders, under whose authority God's people suffer oppression, God promises that he will raise up a "righteous branch", a king who will rule wisely, justly, and righteously. A king who will save his people and who will bring peace. This is why his name will be "The LORD our Righteous Saviour". This king will bring a new exodus. Just as God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt and made Israel his son, so this coming king will gather the house of Israel from all the nations he has been scattered to. He will redeem his people.

The Prophet who is come into the World

The righteous branch is Jesus. In our Gospel reading, we see the miracle he works, and the people's response: "*Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.*" Jesus has begun the work of redemption by dying and rising for our sins and including us in the kingdom of heaven. But, we still await the final work when he returns and all God's people are gathered in the new creation. And, after the year that we had, this is what we really need. The earthly Christmas will be disappointing for so many. All the people who are unemployed will struggle to live up to the demands of consumerism, unable to spend lots of money. Many families will not be complete because many will be stuck overseas, or have died. I am so sad that Phoebe is growing up so quickly and my mum still has not been able to hold her, and I have no idea when that day will come.

Before we celebrate Christmas, we need Advent. We need a righteous Saviour who will judge all evil rulers, destroy death, and establish justice and peace. So, as we begin Advent next Sunday, focus on Jesus and his final return in glory. Fasting is a great way to get us to focus on spiritual truths by giving up on earthly goods, and I encourage you to be intentional about how you can fast in Advent to prepare for Jesus' return. I will be running Bible studies on Tuesday nights—unfortunately we are limited to ten people, but there is some room and if this will help you prepare please contact me.

Conclusion

I opened with the story of the nurse from Shanghai who goes to Disneyland in order to "escape the real world of death in her hospital". As Christmas is coming up, our society is desperate to try and use this season in the same way, to escape the real world of death, lockdown, and tragedy. But for so many of us Christmas will not alleviate the pain and suffering we experience. In fact, financial burdens, the absence of friends and family, so many things will actually make it worse. What we need is a Righteous Saviour. Jesus has begun the work of salvation. He rose from the dead and promises to raise all who believe in him too. He will return and restore all things gone wrong in this world to right. He is worth of our time, our efforts, our lives. This week, we must get ready for Advent, so that we may be ready for the Lord. I conclude with our collect:

"Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

'Starting in Darkness' / Isaiah 1

The First Sunday in Advent

29 November 2020

Isaiah 1, 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

by Patrick Senn

Introduction

Advent begins in the dark. While our culture has set up Christmas lights and trees, plays joyous Christmas carols, and announces peace and hope, we are almost in another world in church. Our faces are covered, we cannot sing, and our readings are serious and there is no hint of the baby Jesus. Instead, we hear the warnings of judgement, the calls to repentance, and God's firm stance against evil.

This might seem backward. After all, in advertising we downplay the bad and focus on the good. A tiny house is 'cosy'. Being next to a busy road with lots of traffic is 'a great location with easy access.' An old car that falls apart is not junk but 'has character'. And we do the same not just with the products we sell but also how we present ourselves to the world. We turn our weaknesses into strength: 'I care too much', 'I am a perfectionist', 'I work too hard.' We try to talk up our qualities, and pretend like our inadequacies do not exist. We might think we are good, or at least good enough; but, the season of Advent has not time for half-truths, cheery optimism and niceness. Rather, Advent begins in the dark.

The Bad News: 'Ah, Sinful Nation!'

The holy prophet Isaiah has no time for human pride. The holy city Jerusalem, and the country of Judah, under the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, must face the facts and hear the bad news. They are children who have rebelled against the LORD (v. 2), a sinful nation laden with iniquity, who have despised the Holy One of Israel (v. 4). In fact, the whole nation is sick: 'from the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness' in it (vv. 5–6). Instead of faithfulness, there is prostitution (v. 21); instead of justice, there is murder (v. 21); instead of silver, there is dross (v. 22). Imminent judgement threatens the city and people.

In all of this, we see the total corruption of the human heart. Even what is good has become perverted. God chose Israel, rescued her from slavery in Egypt, gave her his holy commandments, and the rituals by which to live holy lives and be a light to the nations. And yet, Israel has corrupted all the good ceremonies God gave to her by a superficial observance of them. "*Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.*" (vv. 13–14) Even what is good and holy and given by God, humans have corrupted.

People are no different today. Afghanistan has been plagued with instability, terror attacks, and chaos for decades. Just last year, there was the horrible news of the Taliban attacking a hospital for women and infants. Even for Afghanistan, used to random attacks, such news was traumatic. For a while, the country suffered the lowest life expectancy and highest infant mortality rates. So, it's no wonder that a coalition of Western countries came in to

help bring stability and support the democratically elected government. And yet, Australian soldiers went in there killing civilians as if a sport, to still their blood lust. The last few weeks, our media have described the reports as 'sickening' and 'bone-chilling', describing the soldiers as 'monsters'. We thought we were doing good. Instead, we continued the powers of sin.

One Way Forward

Israel cannot continue in her hypocritical observance of ceremonies and rituals. There is only one way forward. "*Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.*" (vv. 16–17) God demands repentance and amendment of life. He wants his people to turn to him and to be saved. This is why the call to repentance is followed by the great promise: "*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*" (v. 18)

A Thorough Diagnosis

God's Word pulls no punches. It is a bleak assessment of the human condition, but ultimately it is for our good. Without the truth we never can recognise the lies. Without acknowledging the sickness, we cannot be prescribed the healing. Without confession, there cannot be absolution. God's Word is unique in that it does not care about bruising our pride. Earlier this year, the Chinese state television channel aired a coronavirus special. It was an episode dedicated to the frontline workers of Wuhan who were the very first to combat this new virus in hospitals that were completely overwhelmed with new cases. Besides the doctors, nurses, and hospital workers, the CCP politicians were also presented as swift, organised, even heroic their response. But this was a lie. The truth is that government officials threatened doctors who spoke about this new virus, punished them, and downplayed the seriousness of it all until it got out of control and infected the whole world. Humans care about our image, and when the truth is inconvenient we discard it, often with devastating consequences.

God's Word is unique; it does not care about our pride but openly lays bare the problem of sin. And remember, Isaiah is not written to outsiders and unbelievers, but to God's own people and the church. Advent is a season not for outsiders, but for the church. We are to look deep inside of us: do we fall into the trap of superficially observing our rituals? Do we, like Israel, observe rituals hypocritically? Do we pray and go to church so that we can manipulate him and try to bend his will to ours? Or do we do because we love God and he deserves our honour? When I confess my sins, do I do it sincerely and honestly? When I ask God to forgive me, do I hold any grudges and unforgiveness towards anyone else? Advent is the time to cast off the works of darkness, and to walk in the light of God's holy ways.

While God confronts us in our own sin, he does this not to condemn us but in order to save us. The command to repentance is followed by the invitation and promise: "*Come now, let us settle the matter,*" says the LORD. "*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow*" (v. 18).

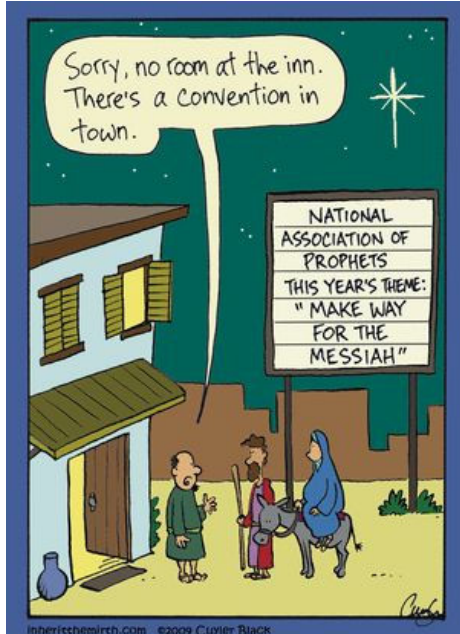
Conclusion

Advent begins in the dark. While our culture around us already declares joy and peace, shopping and advertisements demand our attention, and everyone is rushing to prepare for Christmas day, in the church we acknowledge the darkness within us and around. We do not prepare for Christmas just yet; we prepare for the return of Jesus, 'who shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the living and the dead'. And this is a good thing to do. This actually will increase the joy of Christmas. Only after we have dwelt on the bad news can we really savour the good news. Only when we acknowledge that we are sinners, can we hear the freeing words of forgiveness. Only when we realise that we need saving, can we really appreciate the message that a saviour is born.

That is why Advent is a penitential season, a time of confessing and mourning our sins, a time of fasting and abstaining from earthly desires, in order to focus on more heavenly ones. We do these things because we know God's promise of salvation. God always forgives when we ask; God always restores when we repent; God's grace and mercy always extends towards us even before we turn to him. This is why Christians should always be marked as a people who confess. This is why we are people who confess. This is why we confess our sins every Sunday, and why the Christian life is one of repentance. Because God is infinite in goodness and mercy.

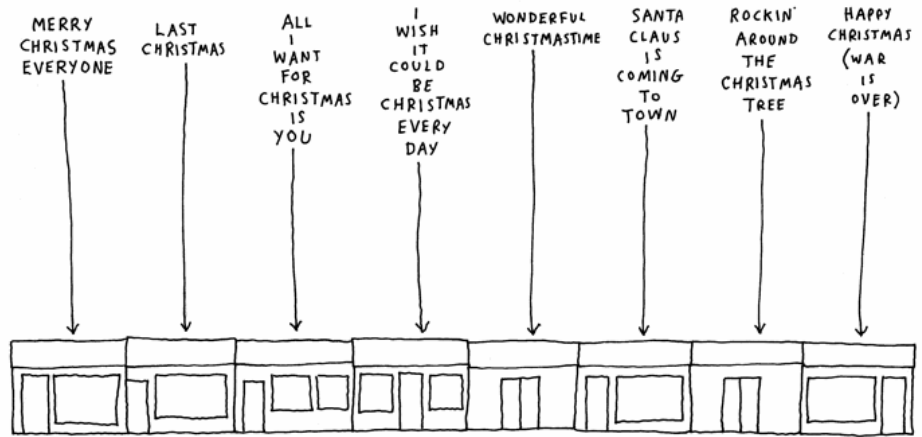
"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land".

AMEN.



CHRISTMAS MUSIC

IN THE SHOPS



PLEASE, HAVE MERCY UPON US

@davewalker /davewalker.cc

Prayers for these times

From our diocese:

PRAYER IN A TIME OF EPIDEMIC DISEASE

Lord Jesus Christ, healer and friend, come and care for all of us through the danger and uncertainty of the coronavirus epidemic.

To people who are sick, bring healing.

To people who are displaced, isolated, or cut off from family, friends or work, bring comfort and companionship.

Work with medical staff as they care for the sick, and protect them from harm.

Give skill and fruitful research to scientists as they search for treatments, prevention and a cure.

To public health authorities, give wisdom to decide the best ways to manage both this crisis and our anxieties.

When communities are fearful, give a calm spirit, and kindness to neighbours and strangers.

Through this testing time, and through all the risks we face together, teach us once again how we can love one another as you have loved us.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

From Bishop Philip Huggins:

A prayer for each day at 1900 hours as we offer prayers for our nation, amidst COVID-19

Gracious God,

We give thanks anew for your providence and presence.

We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas.

We pray for those in need of healing.

We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving.

We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response.

We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders.

We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable.

This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts, we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.



Detail, Tiepolo, St Thecla Liberating the City of Este from the Plague

Parish Council Notes

Extraordinary Zoom meeting of Friday 30th October

2020/21 budget

- Budget presented. In 2019/20 had surplus of \$44,728, so have in hand \$73,717, including JobKeeper \$8884 after the close of books.
- Decided to reduce maintenance allowance to \$24,000, so cash in hand can cover deficit. Decided against reducing Diocesan Assessment allowance. Final budget deficit: \$73,739.
- Decided not to budget for (a) prospective work on St John's: no cost estimate, expect to pay from grants & Dunn bequest; (b) development reports: no proposals, diocese should pay.
- The budget was formally adopted.
- We shall need to look to the future. We cannot sustain large deficits. Unlikely we will get back to full pre-COVID income from current sources: need to look at fundraising.

Sunday services

Approved Denise's proposal for opening:

- If allowed at least 20, re-open first day of Advent, 29 November—also APM, 12 noon in St John's Hall (if allowed) and by Zoom.
- Each Church will meet at the usual time, Denise and Patrick alternating. One to take St Andrew's and Holy Spirit, other St John's and record a simple service during the week.
- Services Morning or Evening Prayer, common across the Parish, with paper Order of Service. Can get Communion privately at home.
- Unclear if we can sing. All will wear masks except for leading or reading.
- Simple service for website, Facebook, YouTube. No DVDs.
- If wish to attend, book in with Patrick, who will email lists to COVID-safe officers, who will check attendees against lists. Each centre to be a bubble; rotation so all get a fair chance. Numbers in attendance strictly observed.
- COVID-safe officers must come early to each service, count as one of the 20. Will ensure:
 - checklist completed;
 - temperatures taken on arrival;
 - record of names and phone nos of attendees;
 - masks provided;
 - hand sanitiser used by each person;
 - people sit in designated pews with spacing.

- For midweek recording, cleric in charge is the COVID-safe officer.
- Intercessors and Bible readers to sit at the front of the church, on opposite sides.
- No morning tea, supper or gatherings/mingling before or after services.
- Cleaning of touched surfaces by congregation at each service, under direction of COVIDsafe officers, who will check off.
- Flexibility to deal with changes to rule.
- Christmas will need special arrangements.

Zoom meeting of Monday 16th November

COVID-19

- Latest Diocesan advice tabled.

Finance report

- Auditing will be done in time for the APM.
- We still had to pay our clergy in October, but \$8884.36 JobKeeper, and \$5000 car park rent, gave us a surplus of \$11,679.07.
- Although courts' car parking arrangements should have ended on 5th October, cars are still parking. Will follow up.
- Try to understand the asset of \$591,663.48 on the balance sheet.

Vicar's report

- The last couple of weeks have been OK. All papers for APM are out, expect Annual Reports document tomorrow.
- Need to check 2021 arrangements are OK. Patrick will be with us in 2021.
- Meeting diocese Monday re property plans.
- Short holiday in Cowes Wednesday–Friday.
- During Advent, Patrick will lead and preach at St Andrew's and Holy Spirit; Denise to lead and preach at St John's and online service.
- How exactly we do Christmas services will have to wait until December.
- St Peter's will start RL meeting again at the same time as us, the 29th.
- Those wishing to attend the APM in person will need to put in a request. Priority to those without internet.
- Discussion of the technical requirements for a mixed Zoom/in person meeting.

Wardens' report

- No meeting on E&Y report with diocese yet.
- 18/12–16 *Jika St*: Changed NBN payment method to direct debit.
- 57 *Gloucester Drive*: Sliding door upstairs still jammed, and displaced stopper of downstairs sliding door has caused pelmet damage. Using agents' handyman.
- *St John's*
 - Changed NBN payment method to direct debit.
 - Still waiting for a list of building repair works with estimated costs.
- 30 *Invermay Grove*: Carport completed, including new guttering.
- *St Andrew's*: Apparent plumbing work in Parish Hall [now known to be a furphy].
- 80 *Watsonia Rd*: Tenants had trouble with the heater, now fixed.
- *Holy Spirit*: Analysis of op shop issues, options.

Diocesan reports tabled.

Op Shop

- Parish Council considered the analysis in the Wardens' Report, the draft MoU sent by BSL, and comments thereon. The present situation is not working well, and getting enough volunteers is now a serious issue. After considering a number of options, Council decided unanimously to try to negotiate a commercial rent with BSL, for BSL to run a fully Brotherhood op shop.
- In the meantime we plan to run the shop for 3½ days a week from 30th November until Christmas.

General Business

- Peter McKay nominated as Churchwarden, Andrew Fegan, Chris Hall & Judy Thomson nominated to Parish Council, Emmi Godau nominated as Treasurer. Andrew wishes to step down from being a warden, but will continue improving our energy bills, for which he was much thanked. Olivia Hoosh will be retiring from Parish Council; she was warmly thanked for her service.
- We need more wardens and more Parish Councillors.

Minutes and précis by Editor

Advent calendar jokes

Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars? Their days are numbered.

I bought a Microsoft advent calendar. If you open too many windows, it shuts down.

What happened to the man who stole an advent calendar? He got 24 days.

My advent calendar only has days that end in 1, 3, 5, 7, or 9. That's odd.

Just got home and found all the doors and windows wide open and everything gone... What kind of sick person would do this to my Advent calendar?

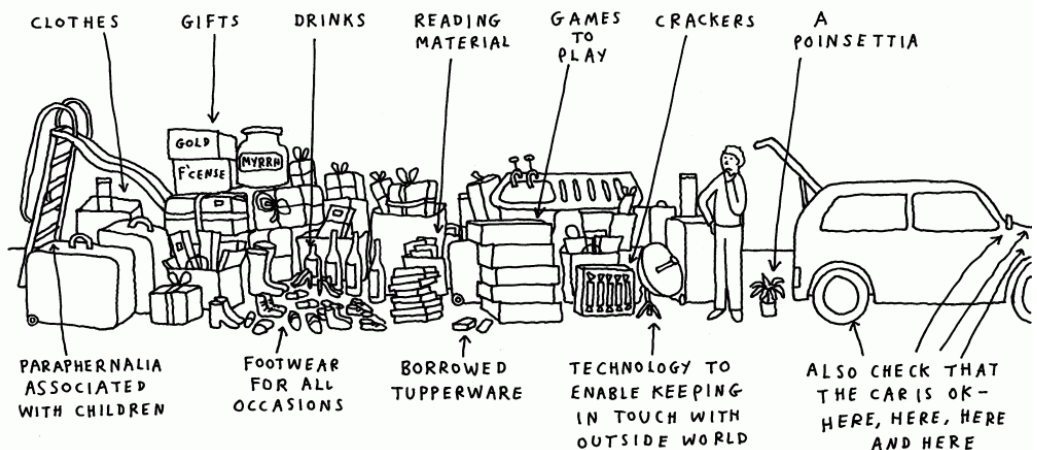
I don't have an advent calendar so I'm just opening cupboard doors and eating whatever's in there.

I've got an Eton-themed advent calendar, where all the doors are opened for me by my dad's contacts. (Ivo Graham)

TRAVELLING

TO VISIT RELATIVES.

THINGS YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE



(AND DON'T FORGET TO BRING IT ALL BACK AGAIN WHEN YOU COME HOME IN THE EVENING)