

BANYULE BABBLE

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

**FEBRUARY
2023**

Office: 1 Burgundy Street Heidelberg 3084 ph. 9457 1144

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

Jonathan Lopez 0403 660 776

Internet: www.banyuleparish.org.au

email banyuleparish@gmail.com

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

DENISE'S DATELINE

WELCOME 2023. I am so excited about what God will do in us, for us, and through us in 2023!

What does the coming year hold for us? Of course, none of us know what may occur, as the Scriptures tell us '...you do not even know what will happen tomorrow...' James 4:14. Yet under God, we still organise and make plans for ourselves and for our Church life together.

This year there will be change for many of us, especially for the people who worshipped and served at St Andrew's Rosanna; please do show love to and pray for these our sisters and brothers as they grieve the loss of their home church, and as they discern which of our Banyule Parish churches will become for them, a new home.

A change for ALL of us is that Parish Council has approved the moving of our St John's service time to 9:30 am on Sundays. This is to accommodate our friends and partners, the people of St Peter's Kanyana who used to use St Andrew's but will now meet from 11:15 am at St John's. So, **from 5 February, Sunday services at St John's will commence at 9:30 am.**

I am praying that this year will be for all of us, a year where we are all **growing in our faith**, and that we also **grow in confidence in inviting** people to get to know Jesus.

How can we keep growing in our faith? Here are some opportunities to explore this year:

- **Keep coming to Church**, of course! ...or watching on live-stream;
- Join a **home group**, where we can delve deeper into God's word, get to know one another, and pray for one another.
 - 1:30 – 3:00 pm most Thursdays at Holy Spirit during term time
 - A fortnightly evening group at the Lopez's home
- Come to the **monthly Prayer Brekky** at Denise's house to share pancakes and pray for Mission (3rd Saturday of each month)
- Come to one (or two or all!) of our planned **Retreat Days**
 - we will hold three of these this year on Saturdays from 9:30 am – 1:30 pm:
 - 22 April
 - 1 July
 - 30 September

And what can we INVITE people to?

- **Church**, any Sunday, but especially when we will have our **Parish Lunches**, which will be once per school term, after a Combined Service.
 - Term 1 Parish get together on Sunday 19 March
- **Alpha Film Series**– which begins on Monday 6 Feb at Holy Spirit Watsonia
- **Your Home**: just being hospitable is a significant ministry to other people.

As you know, we are praying and planning for a new morning service to begin at Holy Spirit Watsonia in July, a new, different type of service that will be relaxed in style. We are praying that through our prayers and efforts, God will bring some of the young families in the Watsonia, Watsonia North, Yallambie, Macleod and Rosanna areas to grow in their faith through being part of this new congregation. Please KEEP praying.

We have MUCH for which to be thankful, so keep praying, thanking God for his blessings, asking for his guidance, and bringing before him our plans for his kingdom to grow in us and through us in 2023.

Yours in Christ,
Denise



mainly music: February 2023

So far during the break we have not had any new enquiries, but with most of the families attending at the end of last year planning to return this is nothing to worry about.

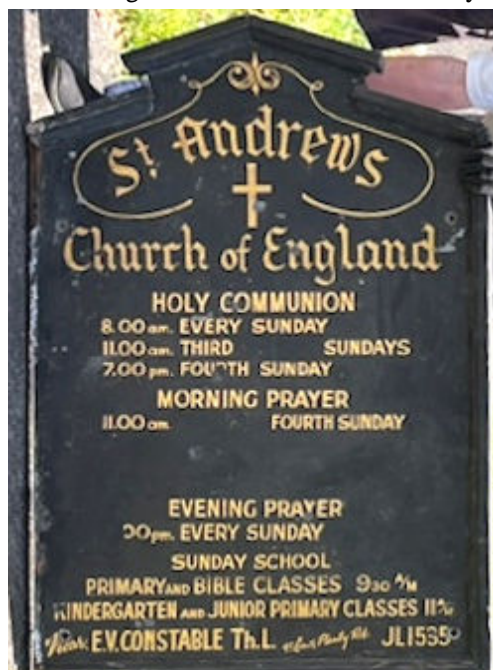
The toys and props have all been cleaned and the team are ready to start 2023 soon after school starts. We generally give the families a week to get used to a new 'timetable' before starting mainly music.

We feel prepared for whatever 2023 may bring us, but please keep praying that we will continue to flourish and that the team will continue in relatively good health and strength!

Rosemary Bellair (0428 595 394)

Phoning Rosemary Bellair

I am being forced into the 21st century! Our land line is misbehaving so please use my mobile number – 0428 595 394 – for any future telephone contact. Email will stay the same.



Left: A small working bee has been cleaning out under the church at St Andrew's, and found this former noticeboard. It will go to the Diocesan Archives, who are already holding the St Andrew's records.

The pattern of services seems unexpected: in the first half of the month only at 8 am and evening, and an extra 11 am service in the second half.

This Month – February

Wednesday 1st: 11 am Iris Grange; 3.30 pm Strathalan

Sunday 5th Epiphany 5: 9.30 am Combined at St John’s (note changed time)

Isaiah 58:3–9a; Psalm 112:1–9; Matthew 5:13–20

Monday 6th: 7 pm Alpha starts at Holy Spirit

Sunday 12th Epiphany 6: 9.30 am St John’s, 5 pm Holy Spirit

Deuteronomy 10:12–22; Psalm 119:1–8; Matthew 5:21–37

Sunday 19th Epiphany Last: 9.30 am Combined at St John’s

Leviticus 19:1–2,9–18; Psalm 119:33–40; Matthew 5:38–48

Wednesday 22nd Ash Wednesday: 10 am Holy Spirit Mothers’ Union; 11 am Streeton Park & general mid-week service at St John’s; 3.30 pm Regis Macleod; 7.30 pm Imposition of Ashes at Holy Spirit

Isaiah 58:1–12; Psalm 51:1–17; Matthew 6:1–21

Sunday 26th Lent 1: 9.30 am St John’s, 5 pm Holy Spirit

Genesis 2:15–17, 3:1–7; Psalm 32; Matthew 4:1–11

Money: December

Income:	Giving:	\$8,164.00
	Gift Day:	\$150.00
	Other:	\$55,753.02
	Total:	\$64,087.02
Expenses:		\$52,991.67
Surplus:		\$11,095.35

Normal giving was up a bit, thank you. Income included grants we received in December for specific purposes: \$30,000 for revitalisation of Holy Spirit and \$10,000 to reline drain pipes in the St John’s car park. This work was not yet done, so there was really a deficit of \$28,904.65.

Holy Spirit Watsonia

Church Flowers for the Christmas Day Service

Thank you to all who contributed to the Christmas Day Flowers at Holy Spirit Church, by donation of money, choosing the flowers, cleaning the urn. Then the apprentice florist walked them across for us.

The next Sunday Service at Holy Spirit, our own Mary Sumner Rose in our church garden was in flower and looked very beautiful also. (Mary Sumner started the Mothers’ Union.)

Mothers’ Union

Our first meeting will be on Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 10 am. After our 3 Cs (clean, cuppa, chat) we shall have our Mothers’ Union Service, then a planning time for the year.

Coral received a Christmas card from our Link Branch, St Mary’s Broughty Ferry Scotland, and will display it on our church notice board.

The meeting will end with Midday Prayers for: MU World-wide, North/West Deanery, Defence Anglican Chaplaincy.

Elsie Storr

Lent and beyond

The penitential season of Lent starts on Wednesday 22nd February, and we shall prepare ourselves at 7.30 pm (note change from last year) at **Holy Spirit**.

At the end of Lent there will be:

- 6 April *Maundy Thursday service of shadows* 7.30 pm St John’s
- 7 April *Good Friday* 9.30 am Holy Spirit
- 9 April *Easter Day* 9.30 am St John’s

Alpha!

Alpha series of films coming up—free! free!! free!!! meal at Holy Spirit Watsonia, beginning on Monday 6th February at 7 pm.

St Andrew’s under-the-church clean-up



The workers were working hard.

Right: The notice-board is found.

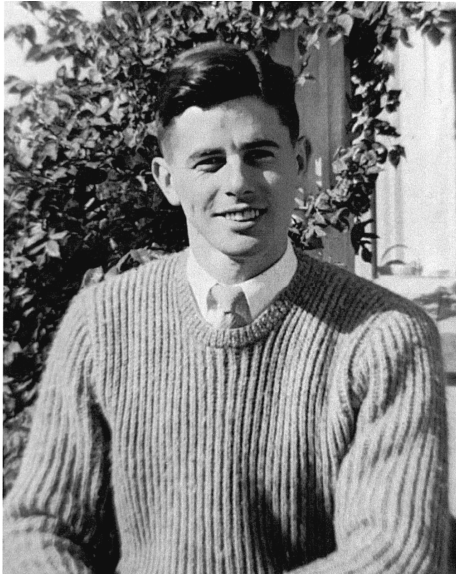
Left and below right: Denise follows Matt 10:42, but charges ten shillings per cup.



STOP PRESS: The Community Garden is grateful for the donation of gardening equipment from St Andrew’s, including brooms for Judy to sweep the gazebo!

Graham Hadley Capp

10 Feb 1933 – 22 Dec 2022



Graham's funeral was held on 9th January 2023 at St John's. The eulogy was read by two of his children, Andrew Capp and Fiona Capp:

Nobody is only one person. When we as a family sat down to talk about Graham, our memories of him and what he meant to us, it was like putting together the pieces of a mosaic. Our individual memories are partial but collectively they amount to something much larger. Most of us here know the public Graham—reserved, circumspect, responsible, gentlemanly, self-possessed. But like all of us, there were aspects of his inner life that were only witnessed or expressed at particular moments.

We want to start with this photograph of him at 15 years old, winning the under-16 100 yards sprint at Melbourne Grammar. In the hours and days after his death, this photograph became particularly meaningful for us. Not only was he crossing the finishing line ahead of the rest. His style, grace, air of freedom and pleasure in his athletic gift spoke of an aspect of his nature which was very much alive in his youth but which he had to leave behind as he grew older and took on the responsibilities of husband, doctor and father. We knew the grounded, diligent Graham with flashes of sly humour, the affable doctor, the disciplinarian, the creature of habit, the traditionalist, the worrier, the loving father and husband. But what this photograph captures is another Graham: the soaring spirit and the dreamer.

The only child

As an only child, he was sometimes lonely but he was by nature self-contained and he learned to be happy in his own company. He was a nine pound babe at birth. After a difficult delivery, his mother, Violet—known to most as Vi—was adamant there would be no more children, despite Alec's hopes for a larger family. Not surprisingly, books became life-long companions for Graham. In his bedroom at their modest, weatherboard house next to the dairy in Preston, he had a couple of shelves and later recalled how he used to arrange and rearrange the books. Among those he remembered were a selection from well-known novels and poems and a Silver



Jubilee publication about the royal family. Like lots of boys of this era, he also loved Biggles and comics. As well, there were the School Papers—a magazine that came out monthly—which he felt had an English feel about them and possibly sowed the seeds of his later passion for English publications such as *Punch*, *Country Life* and *This England*.

The Anglophile Graham wasn't just inspired by what he read. His mother came out from Britain when she was five years old. Her father worked in a boot-making factory and was a staunch Labor man who once said he would vote for a camel if it ran for the ALP. But Violet's background clearly left her sensitive to class prejudice and she was determined that her son would have the advantages that she had lacked. So, she enrolled him in elocution lessons, signed him up for MCG membership and sent him to Melbourne Grammar.

Melbourne Grammar

It was an afternoon in late spring when Graham, Alec and Vi sat in the principal's office, sun streaming through the windows. For the entrance interview at Melbourne Grammar, he was shown a picture relating to the English civil war and asked to describe what he saw. As Graham recalled it, 'the headmaster wanted to see if I could put two words together.' The thing that stuck in his mind was 'the lovely setting of his office, the English atmosphere.' For the next six years, he would cross the Merri creek and take the East Coburg tram over the river to the leafy suburbs of the south. Most of the boys at Grammar had never heard of Preston but he didn't find them snobbish. Alec was a local councillor who would become mayor of Preston twice and in Graham's words, 'Dad was very forceful in his views that we were as good as anyone else.'

And he was. He was a top student and exceptional athlete—a sprinter, long-jumper, hurdler, winning school and state championships. A fine footballer, he played on the wing for Grammar at the MCG in the concrete-tipped boots his grandfather had made for him. In his senior years, he performed in school plays alongside fellow student Barry Humphries, who even then showed a penchant for dressing as a woman. After Andrew reluctantly followed in his footsteps at Melbourne Grammar, he escaped a detention because the teacher, 'Dogger' Banks, had

never forgotten that he'd unfairly given Graham a detention many years before. When Nic and Graham played in the annual Father versus Son game of cricket—both of them captain of their respective teams—Graham top scored. Nic remembers his flair in the field, too, where he picked up the ball at slips on the half volley and nonchalantly flicked it back at the stumps to take a wicket. And cricket wasn't even his chosen game.

Sorrento

During this period, Graham, Alec and Vi would go camping in the dunes at Sorrento back beach for six weeks every summer with their Preston neighbours. In a way, they pioneered glamping. Graham had a cast iron double bed in his tent and Alec and Vi had an American army tent big enough for a whole platoon. Graham and friends would collect driftwood from the beach for their fires and go fishing from the reef at the base of Darby's rock. Out of this experience came a lifelong love of the ocean which he and Margaret passed on to us. In the early 1960s, Alec and Vi bought the house at Salonika Street, Sorrento, which remains today a sanctuary for all the extended family and friends who have shared it with us. From the photographs of his sporting days that hang in the billiard room, to the leather bound journals on the shelves in the lounge room, the house echoes with his presence.

Elocution & Courtship

One of the visitors when the Capps were camping at the back beach was Elsie Holyoak, the elocution teacher who played such a big part in the childhood and youth of both Graham and Margaret, and who became unwitting matchmaker. Graham's first memory of Margaret was of a 'sweet little thing' on stage in a box playing a doll in one of the many performances they were in. Margaret was four when they met and Graham eight. In a production of 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', Elsie serendipitously cast Graham as the dwarf, Doc. Margaret's cousin, Jennifer Eddy, was Bashful and Margaret played a flower girl. At 13, when he performed a selection from Dickens' 'Oliver Twist', the eisteddfod adjudicator remarked on Graham's 'fine stage presence' and excellent character portrayal. It was this training that instilled in him a love of language and literature which he would pass on to his children.

Margaret once said to her mother, Edna, that she was not going to marry anyone who 'smoked, drank, swore or gambled' to which Edna replied, 'Well darling you're going to be left on the shelf.' But in Graham she found such a man. They weren't entirely square, however, and used to sing along in the car to Johnny O'Keefe doing 'Rock Around the Clock'. He proposed to her during one of their regular walks along The Boulevard in Ivanhoe. Her reply, Margaret says, was a foregone conclusion.

Marriage & Children

A week after they were married, they left for Tasmania, where Graham took up his first job at the Royal Hobart Hospital. As Senior Resident, he did paediatrics and obstetrics and would sometimes work 48 hours straight. They had little money but it felt like an adventure working with a tight-knit community of residents from all over Australia. It was to be a very happy two years. While he delivered many babies at the Royal Hobart, it was not done—at this time—for fathers to be present at the birth of their children. So, in their second year there, Debra was delivered by a midwifery sister whom Graham had helped train while he remained outside the door of the delivery room.

Back in Melbourne, Graham was working at Prince Henry's Hospital when Andrew was born and it was discovered that there was a problem with the valves in his ureter. Margaret and Graham were told by the senior urological surgeon there was nothing that could be done for him and that they should 'take him home to die'. Fortunately, a young surgeon just back from America had the knowhow to successfully operate on him.

A year later, Margaret was six months pregnant when she had an x-ray which showed she was carrying twins. She rang Graham to tell him and when she got home, he was still sitting in the same spot where he'd taken the phone call. With four children in three years, the pressure was enormous but they managed with support of their parents, particularly Margaret's father, Roy.

Graham started in General Practice at a surgery in Rosanna around this time with Harold Lanyon, Zoli Okalyi and much later, Katrina Philip who is playing the organ here today. In those days, GPs did everything from delivering babies to general surgery and anaesthetics. It was not uncommon for him to be called out in the middle of the night for emergencies, covering territory as far as Hurstbridge. One time, he was met by a man on horseback who then led him to the patient. Over the years, it was not unusual for him to run into people in the street who would greet him and tell him he had delivered their child or delivered them.

Eighteen months after the twins, Fiona arrived unplanned. And then came Nic. Just when Margaret thought she'd perfected the art of giving birth, her nine-pound second son showed her otherwise.

Faced with a potentially anarchic household, Graham became increasingly particular about creating a sense of domestic order, always putting away things that had been left lying around and incinerating any wanton rubbish. His zealotry about cleaning the BBQ is now family legend. Melinda remembers how he would often start vacuuming under our feet at the table before we'd finished dinner, a habit her son Teishan seems to have inherited.

Graham was by nature a cautious person but he threw caution to the wind when he played 500, bidding recklessly and, to our delight, often pulling it off. When he was younger he was a fine dancer and we all have very fond memories of dancing on his feet to Trini Lopez singing 'Lemon Tree Very Pretty'. A strict but loving father, his innate reserve did not prevent him from showing his love. We were never in doubt about the depth of his feeling for us. Debra remembers him giving her a printed copy of 1 Corinthians, chapter 13 about the power of love. She was going through a difficult time as a teenager and he urged her to read it when she was feeling low. The English poet Phillip Larkin wrote, 'All that will survive of us is love'. This has never felt so true as it does since our father's death.

Middle and Old Age

The stress of running, with his various medical partners, three surgeries—Rosanna, Watsonia and Greensborough—and raising a family of six children finally caught up with Graham when he was 54 in the form of a coronary. Determined to lower his cholesterol, Margaret discovered the low fat, high fibre Pritikin diet and their willpower became a thing to behold. Meredith recalls watching Graham preparing a piece of meat for the BBQ and removing every last skerrick of fat with a scalpel.

As time went on, the family universe expanded further with the arrival of Deb's children Emma, Bec, Tom and later, Lauchie and Oscar; grandparenthood beginning when Graham and Margaret were only in their early 40s. Ever-expanding, this universe came to include: Melinda's son Teishan, Meredith's children Anna, Eva, Sophie and Tilly; Nic's two children Charlotte and Alex and Fiona's son Leo. Graham would call the grandchildren 'old fruit' and they affectionately remember how he played at being the stern sergeant-major, conducting inspections of their bedrooms at Sorrento to make sure they had made their beds correctly and then rewarding them with gold coins. Expanding even more, this universe embraced great grandchildren, Emma's Frankie and Freda, and finally Bec's daughter Fiadh.

Until his 60s, Graham had been an armchair traveller, collecting books such as *The Motorways of Britain* and soaking up grand houses from the photographs in 'Country Life'. Finally Margaret persuaded him to get out of the armchair and together they saw Europe for the first time. Once he got a taste for it, he was hooked.

It is no overstatement to say that Margaret and Graham were wedded at the hip. They did everything together. Graham's love for Margaret is beautifully captured in the words he wrote to her quoting a letter from the French sculptor Auguste Rodin to his wife. 'This letter is just to tell you that my mind is full of the greatness of God's gift to me when he put you at my side. Keep this thought of mine in your generous heart.' Then Graham added, 'Enjoy your family and have a happy Mother's Day.'

Although he went to Sunday school in Preston and chapel at Melbourne Grammar, Graham once reflected, 'I was blissfully a-religious until your mother came along.' The Uniting Church next door in Rosanna was a big part of all our lives when we were growing up and later, when they spent more time at Sorrento, Margaret and Graham became part of the community at the Anglican church

there. They were very ecumenical, however. One time Margaret invited the forthright Buddhist nun, Rubina Corton, to talk to the congregation. While she was staying with them at Sorrento, Rubina asked Graham to shave the stubble on her head. He delighted in telling this story because it was such an unlikely thing to find himself doing. Graham never spoke to us about his beliefs but he did say to Margaret that he felt that 'God is a state of being in our hearts and minds.'

Having always done everything together, it was heart wrenching for them both when Graham finally had to enter aged care in April 2022 because Parkinson's had left him with such high needs. He had worked at Strathalan as the visiting doctor for many years, making his weekly consultations before returning home to us, never dreaming that he would end up a resident himself. There is no escaping the fact that he did not want to be there and would often make droll cracks about his incarceration. But like all of us, he had his good days and his bad days. We visited him as often as we could, Margaret going every morning. He was also lovingly tended to by Lucy D'Amore, his carer who looked after him when he was still at home and who continued this care once he was in Strathalan.

When Fiona visited, she would read him poetry knowing how much he savoured the rhythms and music of it. One day she was reading The Seven Ages of Man speech from Shakespeare's 'As You Like It', forgetting how confrontingly it ends: 'Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.' 'Well, that wasn't exactly cheerful,' she said. To which he replied in his now frail voice, 'I don't mind. It's relevant to this place. And poetry as good as Shakespeare is always worth hearing.'

Twenty-four hours after his death, a quote from Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' popped into Fiona's head. 'Doubt thou the stars are fire/ Doubt that the sun doth move/ Doubt truth to be a liar/ But never doubt I love,' as if he were still talking to us, reassuring us. We hope he will keep speaking to us, through the literature that he loved, the places at Sorrento, the sheer joy of our bodies moving through the air. In the end, he was a captive in the body that had once gracefully sprinted to the finish-line. But now he is free.

The reading was 1 Corinthians 13, and Denise preached that 'Death stops life, but it does not stop love'. At his wish, Graham's body lay softly on the environment, enshrouded in a reusable casket.



John Graham Clarke

8 April 1937 – 18 December 2022



The Rev'd John Clarke was Vicar of St John's 1978–1988, and many St John's people continued to keep in touch. In his last days he returned to our parish by living in Strathalan in Macleod. His well-attended funeral was held at St John's on 24th January, and he had organised the hymns, readings, music, and even written his own obituary.

John's obituary, read by his son David:

John Graham Clarke was born at Cremorne, Sydney on the 8th April 1937, the only son of John Featherstonehaugh Clarke and Emily Madeline Clarke née Johnson. Their only other child, Helen Frances, had been born two years earlier.

John lived with family at Balmoral Beach on Sydney Harbour but only for a few months as his father had purchased a home at 117 Wanganella St, Balgowlah Heights.

John's schooling began at Balgowlah Primary School, Seaforth, where he met Peter Smart who became a lifelong friend; it was completed at Manly Boys' High School. He then obtained a position at the English, Scottish & Australian Bank at the Haymarket Branch. During these years his life consisted of home, work and church.



John moved from the bank to work for a short time at Harding & Halden, a drawing office supplier. After school years, John attended Fort Street Sydney Evening College doing further study.

After a holiday in Armidale, Rev Barry Thiering, a curate at All Saints Balgowlah, said he had spoken to the Bishop of Armidale in NSW, who had told him he was looking for men to come to his diocese for ministry. John had a phone call from the Bishop offering him a place in the Armidale Diocese and things progressed.

John's next 3 years were spent at Ridley Theological College in Melbourne studying. A good friend from High School days Peter Swane, and John Wilson also accepted, and they all became lifelong good friends.

The principal of Ridley College was Rev Stuart Barton-Babbage with the Vice-Principal being Dr Leon Morris who became a good friend and Minister at Holy Trinity Doncaster in his later days there.

John was ordained in St Peter's Cathedral, Armidale on 21st December, 1962.

While at Fort Street Evening College, John met Joan Hawkins. John and Joan were married at Holy Trinity Bexley North on 27th December 1962 by the Rev Gordon Thomas who remained a good friend throughout John's life.

John & Joan moved to St John's Parish Tamworth where John had been appointed Curate. Their first 3 children, David, Alison and Jennifer were all born at Tamworth.

From Tamworth, John moved to Emma-ville and then to work with Peter Chiswell in a Team Ministry at Christ Church in Gunnedah where Emma was born. In 1974 the family moved to Victoria to be the Vicar of St Phillip's Avondale Heights in Melbourne's western suburbs.

In 1978, he was appointed as Vicar of the historic parish of St John's Heidelberg where he remained until 1988.

In this time, he was also made Area Dean of the Heidelberg Parish.

John was assisted by a fine group of curates, wonderful organisers, vast congregations and many lay people in all his parishes. Many people he remained in contact with and remained good friends over many years.

John's church work extended from just the parish and he became Vice-Chairperson of the Victorian Branch of the Church Missionary Society. He also conducted the singing at the annual summer school and heard from many retired missionaries of their work. He took the lunch Bible study groups at St Paul's Cathedral for many years.

After ten years as Vicar of Heidelberg, a position then became available as an Assistant Minister with Rev Alan Hoskin at Holy Trinity Doncaster where he remained for a few years.

Archbishop Keith Rayes then offered him the parish of St James Ivanhoe in 1993 where he stayed till he retired in 2002. He also sat on the board of Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School during this time.

Previous to retirement, John had completed an Arts Degree at La Trobe University and was very proud to graduate on the same day with his daughter, Emma. He had also begun a Master's Degree studying the life of Queen Victoria which was a lifelong interest he had.

He then moved to Templestowe Retirement Village in 2012 where he lived for nearly eight years. He was involved in music groups, church and enjoyed the regular social activities. His sister, Helen also lived at the Village. They both made new friends and enjoyed many happy occasions.

John had many happy holidays with his family and others especially, Clergy Rest at Phillip Island when his children were growing up, trips to Merimbula and many trips back to Sydney and the Blue Mountains to see his family over the years.

He loved travelling and travelled extensively to New Zealand, Europe and America over many years.

A memorable trip in 2013, John & Helen travelled on the 'Arcadia' cruising from Sydney to Southampton, a wonderful trip for 46 nights. They travelled to New Zealand, San Francisco, through the Panama Canal and Barbados on their way to the UK.

John met Elizabeth Wragg while she was staying with John & Helen Wedd in Melbourne. She became good friends of John and Helen and in the following years, they spent many times travelling with her to New Zealand, within Australia, Great Britain and Europe. Through Elizabeth, he also met so many of her church friends from Sth Harrow in London and experienced their wonderful hospitality. She had remained a dear friend of John's.

Elizabeth, together with all of John's friends he had met and known for many years, enriched his life. He valued their friendship and had many wonderful times together with all of them. Peter & Elizabeth Smart, John & Jill Wilson, Peter & Margaret Swane, John & Helen Wedd, Gordon & Joan Thomas, Gay & Robin Miller, Val & Rob Lennie, just to mention a few.

John was an excellent cook and catered for family and friends over the years. Christmas dinners would be multiple courses over the day. He could actually cook pretty much anything, generally with little reference to recipes. His children have inherited this trait. His other passion was the royal family, especially Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth, and his knowledge of them and the family was extensive. He loved reading and watching shows about the royal family.

In January 2020, John moved into Bapt-care Strathalan, where he had had a long connection over many years visiting residents when he was in Ministry.

He lived there happily for nearly 3 years and although Covid lockdowns made it hard, he was well cared for as he struggled with his health from time to time.

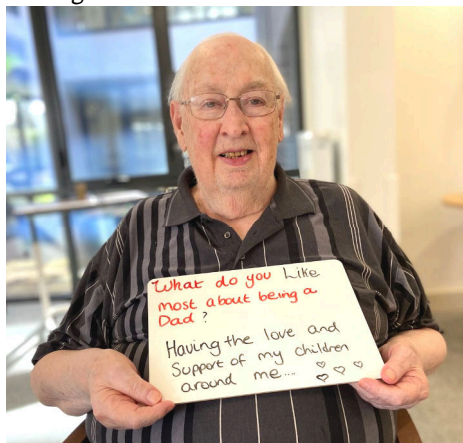
He was encouraged to participate in the church services at Strathalan and take part of the service at times which he really enjoyed.

John also enjoyed Val Lennie's weekly music sessions at Strathalan. John was well-known for his beautiful voice, within the church setting, and all through his life. He loved to sing and everyone loved to hear him sing. The grandchildren always loved it when he would just burst into song at family gatherings.

I close this eulogy with the words of the hymn writer, John Newton: *Jesus my Shepherd, Saviour (Brother), Friend, My Prophet, Priest and King: My Lord, My Life, My way, My End – Accept the praise I bring.*

At this point David added a few words of his own. His father had come from a very large family, having nine brothers and a sister, which he thought had shaped his character.

Music was very important to John. When he came to Avondale Heights it was sparsely populated and undeveloped, with mainly dirt roads. Nevertheless John organised 'music halls' with a variety of musical works, including up to 200–300 people singing. John himself was liable to start belting out a hymn at any time, including on the street or in a restaurant, which he (David) found acutely embarrassing.



The readings were Philippians 4:4–9 and 1 Corinthians 13, interspersed with a solo hymn by Gay Miller. There followed an address by John's friend the Rev'd Peter Smart.

I have Peter Smart's handwritten notes for his sermon before me, and he started by commenting that to be nominated to speak was an honour and a privilege 'like the last squeeze of a handshake', but that he said 'nominated' because he wasn't actually *asked*. Indeed, he had expected that John would be speaking at his funeral.

Peter and John had gone to primary and high school together, church and fellowship together, were ordained together, and served together in Armidale. They had holidays together, shared milestone events, and generally did everything together. They weren't quite married together, but were at each other's weddings.

Peter pointed out that that the readings John had chosen were not usual for funerals, and he considered they were chosen because they moved him, motivated him, inspired him, influenced his behaviour, and shaped his belief, life and character.

In the Philippians reading Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord, while he himself was in prison facing an uncertain future, and his recipients were in doubt and fear, surrounded by hostility. It is not a call to ignore reality and pretend all will be fine, but a reminder of real faith.

Secondly, Paul calls us to deal with our anxieties by prayer and thanksgiving, which is the road to peace.

And thirdly, Paul calls on us to think ('We haven't the money, so we've got to think': Sir Ernest Rutherford). By thinking on good things and putting them into practice, life can be rich in beauty and goodness, which John demonstrated.

John, said Peter, chose the reading from 1 Corinthians on love, because he knew its secrets. Without love we gain nothing, not achievements or knowledge or faith or sacrifice: nothing counts.

Secondly, love is earthy, ordinary, practical.

Thirdly, it never fails, while everything else has a sunset clause.

Peter pointed out that 1 Cor 14:1 continues, 'Make love your aim', and that John had done just that. He was known and remembered for his love, and now awaited him a crown of righteousness.

There were hymns, a tribute to John from 13 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren, a clarinet recital from a grandchild, Harry Petrou, prayers by Denise, and prayers and a blessing on all, from Bishop Paul Barker.

Keith Douglas Harry Lee

5 June 1937 – 26 December 2022



The memorial service for Keith Lee, Margaret Lee's husband, was held in St John's on 25th January. At Keith's request, the service was taken by Helen McAlley, who had brought Home Communion to the Lees for a long time.

Helen also mentioned the Lees' cat Milly (or 'Milly Molly Mandy?'), who went off her food when Keith went to hospital, but has now been nursed back to health.

Several people gave eulogies for Keith. His daughter Julie (Julieann) said that he was a true gentleman and gentle man, who cried tears on her birthdays, and fed a group of magpies year by year, so they presented their young to him for recognition. When he had to give up his car she took him to Aldi, because he loved shopping, and during lockdown discovered baking.

Keith's son Christopher spoke next, and said that Keith was a hard worker,

who did the work no-one else wanted to do. He thought a lot, but didn't say a lot; but at Christopher's first full-time job he advised him to organise superannuation, which was then neither compulsory nor common. He loved baked beans with mashed potatoes, and loved sci-fi films, and was always hoping for aliens.

Jess spoke for the granddaughters:

Hi everyone, I'm Jess and I am reading this for myself and behalf of my sister Kass. I'd like to start off by saying that we're very lucky to be his only grandchildren and it is a blessing that we're very grateful for and will be for the rest of our lives. When writing this it was hard to put the many memories about him into words.

My sister and I can both agree our favourite memory of Pa together was when we'd go to the movies and we'd sit three rows in front of him because during the movie he'd fall asleep and start snoring really loud, even though it didn't matter where we sat, we could still hear him snoring away.

Pa was always into his gardening from when I first knew him until the very end. And that is my favourite memory with him. When he taught me how to garden, we used to plant and tomatoes and he taught be things like the different types of carrots.

Kass' favourite memory with him was when he'd join in playing board games. But he would apparently always cheat according to Nan especially when it came to Monopoly. Because he'd always buy all the houses but never left any for anyone else

But on the school holidays Kass and I would always help him. He'd always wash the dishes and then Kass and I would take in turns at drying the dishes and we'd just have a nice conversation with him.

It's sad to know that he's gone and I know he'll always be in our hearts. But I always remember this quote I got told: 'Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened'. Pa we will both always miss you, and we have many memories to hold onto. You were a kind, loving and hard-working man and as well as being our Pa you will always be our friend. I know you'll guide us and be with us until the very end. We love you Pa, until we meet again.

Jason Triggs then read Margaret's eulogy, on 57 years of marriage. The *Babble* does not yet have a copy of this, but will publish it when it does.



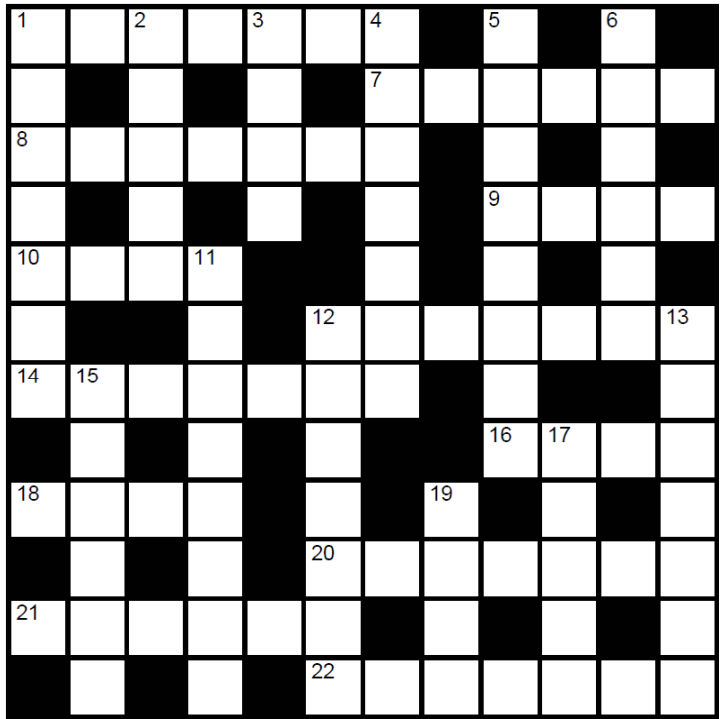
Keith liked lollies, and his surplus stash was featured in the afternoon tea.

Across

Down

- 1 A Herod (7)
- 7 Not at sea (6)
- 8 Hanging cloth (7)
- 9 Clean animal (4)
- 10 Killed (4)
- 12 Proud of (7)
- 14 Ones who owe (7)
- 16 Portion (4)
- 18 Angle (4)
- 20 Bible outcast (7)
- 21 Diseased persons (6)
- 22 Breastplate stone (7)

- 1 Pointed a finger at (7)
- 2 Days of Saul's blindness (5)
- 3 Talk to God (4)
- 4 Moses removed his (7)
- 5 He escaped incineration (8)
- 6 Country (6)
- 11 Guards (8)
- 12 Oath (7)
- 13 Desecrated (7)
- 15 Banished people (6)
- 17 River of Damascus (5)
- 19 Footwear (4)



by *Philologus* © BiblePuzzles.org.uk
 Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

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

**Abraham & Sarah
 Anagram**

www.dltk-kids.com



- arsst _____
- cdehilnr _____
- aacis _____
- agghilnu _____
- iiorsstv _____
- aceilmr _____
- aaabhmr _____
- aahrs _____
- aeprry _____
- afilmr _____

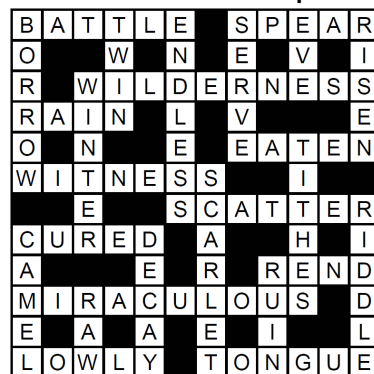
Bible Word Search – Baptism of Jesus

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_BaptismOfJesus_0.htm

- Abraham, Camel's hair, Confessing, Dove, Fire, Galilee,
- Generation, Heavens, He suffered him, Holy Ghost, Jesus, John
- the Baptist, Jordan, Locusts, Loins, Paths straight, Repentance,
- Repent ye, Spirit of God, Straightway, Thoroughly purge,
- Unquenchable, Water, Well pleased, Wilderness, Wrath to come

Answers to last month's puzzles



Bible Word Search mystery answer:
MANGER

- Last month's anagram:
- eeegmnrsss messengers
 - ceoprtt protect
 - bdeeinot obedient
 - aeehvn heaven
 - abefiltuu beautiful
 - aceegnorrsv encouragers
 - adhnosstu thousands
 - defilnry friendly
 - beiiilnsv invisible
 - bghirt bright

Christmas Day

25th December 2022

1 Peter 1:1–12; Luke 2:6–7

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

1 Peter 1:1–12

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles, scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Praise to God for a living hope

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you,⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care,¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Luke 2:6–7

⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

A new birth brings great excitement, doesn't it? I went to the zoo on Friday with a friend to see the two new baby elephants. They were so cute! There's another one on the way—conceived naturally, not through IVF; and as the male elephants are usually solitary, they are kept quite away from the matriarchal herd, and all the aunties are looking after the little ones as well.

At the zoo there were crowds of people wanting to see the new babies—a real microcosm of Melbourne. There were so many people wanting to see these new babies we had to QR-code in and book a time. There were people of all ethnicities and ages: children in prams, babies carried, toddlers held aloft by dads to see the babies, little children saying, 'They're so cute!', and me saying, 'Little one, don't step on your trunk!'

The one who is about three weeks old still looked a little bit out of it, and was sort of not quite sure where to put his feet; and the other one, the little girl, who was two weeks older, so she's only five weeks old—she was

so much more confident, and running and playing in the dirt and having a wonderful time.

Baby animals are so very cute; and in places like our Melbourne Zoo, when new babies are born it is a time of great rejoicing, such as with these baby elephants, or in 2020 the snow leopard triplets, not because they're cute and they get the revenues up—although they do do that—but because of what it means. It means for zoos, like our zoos here in Australia that participate in ethical and sustainable breeding programs, every new birth is a sign of hope: hope for the preservation of these populations, some of which are endangered.

You know the United Nations estimates tell us that about 385,000 babies are born today, and every day, around the world: 140 million people every year. But at Christmas, we Christians celebrate just one birth, on one particular day: the birth of a Jewish baby in a backwater town of the Roman Empire, to a young woman who dared to trust God's promise about this child who had been miraculously given to her—that he is the hope, not just of her family, but of all the people of the Earth.

And in our longer reading today we had this verse speaking after Jesus had died and been resurrected about him, that says: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

Many people hope desperately for a child, for many reasons. In previous centuries it was to carry on the family name. I've been re-watching *The Forsyte Saga* on BritBox: a wonderful story about the Forsyte family, and their desperate need to have a child to carry on the business, to carry on the name of the family.

Even close to home, we know that those who stand in the succession line of the monarchy of Great Britain and the Commonwealth—we know who they are, don't we? Well, we know that now there is King Charles, and the next in line is William, and then George, and then it will be George's firstborn, whether it's a boy or a girl, because the ruling that it had to be a male heir has been changed. We know that when Princess Diana gave birth to Prince William there was great rejoicing, because an heir had been secured; and then with Harry they now had the 'heir and the spare' which is what they were often called—and it's very interesting, isn't it, that Prince Harry's book that is coming out in January is called *Spare*.

People want to have a child to carry on the family business, or to keep the business going. The Christ Child born at Bethlehem, whom we praise in our carols—we praise him as *newborn King, the Son of God, Saviour, Emmanuel, God With Us*. And as Christians we affirm that Jesus is our hope; and so today we celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus, the Christ.

A new baby's arrival is met with great joy but it's usually quite a private matter these days, isn't it? Just the family and immediate friends. Sometimes, I don't know if people still take out an ad in the paper to announce the birth—that used to be quite common—but in the Biblical account of Jesus' birth, even though it was very simple, in a little place called Bethlehem, and the baby wrapped in cloths and placed in a manger—an animal food trough—because it was so crowded, it wasn't a private matter.

We know from the Biblical accounts of Jesus' birth that we find in Matthew and in Luke—well, some angels come! And there are some ordinary people, working people, out in the fields, who came to see this new child—not a member of their family, but their Hope revealed to them by the angels. And then there was a great choir of angels singing about glory to God on high, and on Earth peace to those on whom his favour rests. And then a little later we had the Magi, those astronomers from the East, turning up and praising God, looking for this new King. This is not just the crowded nature of the Christmas scene, but the fact that this birth wasn't a private matter—this birth of the Lord Jesus Christ was good news, not just for Mary, but for all people.

When Jesus, at eight days old, was presented in the temple, he was praised by the prophetess Anna as God's answer, the one who would bring God's salvation. In his life Jesus went about the family business, his Father's business: the establishment of the kingdom of God on Earth. This was his whole life, and death's work: Christmas and Easter, those two great Christian festivals that speak to us of God's great love for all his creation, and for humanity most of all. On that first Good Friday, the Son of God died on the cross—but with the dawn of Resurrection Sunday, the triumph over even death. That is the promise and hope for all who trust in Jesus.

No wonder Peter the writer says in our reading today: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* Jesus' resurrection on Easter Day secures our hope, our living hope.

Well the birth of Christ that we celebrate today heralds new birth and living hope that God offers to all people. Just as babies are always a symbol of new beginning, the birth of the Christ child is a sign of God's new and amazing work.

Christmas is a time of a new beginning: Christ's birth occurred so that all may come into God's family; so it's a good time for us to think about our response. One of the things that we're doing as a church here, in early February, is running again a short course called the Alpha film series, and on the way out you'll be given a little card. It's an opportunity for you to continue your journey of faith, consider the place of faith in your life, and ask ANY question you like. A free meal, seven o'clock: watch a film, chat about it, home by 8.30. It's our gift to you: please come along. I'll give you one of those cards on the way out.

This Christmas time of new beginnings: it's a good time to think about, 'What's my new step for the new year about my Christian faith?' Hope through the new birth of Jesus: the hope of eternity for us all. And so today we praise God that our hope has been secured through our Lord Jesus, through his birth at Bethlehem those over 2000 years ago today; but his birth is the hope for us all, for all eternity. Amen.

Christmas 1: Hope through the generations

1st January 2023

Matthew 1:1–17

Sermon by Jonathan Lopez

¹ This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

³ Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

⁵ Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

⁶ and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

⁷ Solomon the father of Rehoboam,

Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

Abijah the father of Asa,

⁸ Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,

Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,

Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

⁹ Uzziah the father of Jotham,

Jotham the father of Ahaz,

Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,

Manasseh the father of Amon,

Amon the father of Josiah,

¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

¹² After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,

Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,

Abihud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Elihud,

¹⁵ Elihud the father of Eleazar,

Eleazar the father of Matthan,

Matthan the father of Jacob,

¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

Intro

Q: How well do you know your family tree?

How many generations can you or your family recall?

What is a pattern you see in the tree? What sticks out? There might be more boys or girls, or a common profession that family gravitate to (mine mostly medical: nurses & doctors).

When I engage in funerals this is a key area to understand. Especially when the family may have not have had many connections to the church but their deceased relative wanted a 'christian' funeral.

It's a significant area of conversation in meeting people I have just met in prep for a funeral... and we sure have had a few this year, with more to come!

I only recently found out that a few generations ago on my mother's side we had Indian genealogy! My uncle said: that's why your nose isn't flat like ours!

It is interesting why the gospel writer Matthew begins with a genealogy.

I thought that because Luke (the gospel writer) had a medical background, he would be the one who would start his gospel with a genealogy. But Matthew is a tax collector so he may be a 'details' person which may explain the details he goes into in his gospel account at the start.

If you retold the story of Jesus, where would you begin?

- The prophets? John seems to allude to this approach
- The cross, and work your way back?
- The nativity

This is a great thing to think about if someone asked you about Jesus (where did Jesus come from?). Very practical... and more importantly, WHY DID JESUS COME THROUGH THIS FAMILY?...which we hope to explore today.

Matthew chooses to begin with Jesus' family line.

Today we end our HOPE series with **HOPE for the generations.**

This passage is a fitting passage to connect with this subject!

All the way from Abraham to Jesus, all these generations hoped in the coming of a king who will bring about blessing and the Kingdom of God.

I am not going to go into great detail about each generation, but rather look at two key people mentioned in v 1: David and Abraham.

Pray:

HOPE in Jesus, the rock and foundation of the church

That the GIFT of faith may open our hearts, minds, ears, hands and souls to be led by your Holy Spirit this year 2023

PRAY for a hunger in us to share our hope in a world where many don't feel and see hope.

As many of us know the 'son of David' title refers to King David in the Old Testament. So together with Matthew stating that Jesus is the Messiah—the one who saves his people—he will also be a **King**.

Again many of you may know Abraham from the Old Testament and know that Abraham made a covenant with God in which Abraham's descendants would be (Gen 12:3) a **Blessing** to all people on earth.

Part 1: Blessing—legitimacy & illegitimacy

I asked earlier: what is a pattern you see in your family tree? What sticks out? What do you see as a pattern in Jesus' genealogy?

As v 17 sums up the groupings of Jesus' family tree by 14 x 14 generations:

- vv 2–6a: Abraham to King David: Jesus is clearly of *Jewish* and *royal* descent
- vv 6b–11: David to Jeconiah: the ups and downs of this royal family which eventually lead to exile
- vv 12–16: Post-exile: a relatively quiet period where not much happens. Some of these descendants are appointed as governors until Mary, the mother of Jesus, who is the Messiah, steps into the scene

One obvious pattern here is that Jesus' genealogy is by no means full of 'perfect' people.

'Jesus is presented as the one who will ignore human labels of legitimacy and illegitimacy to offer his gospel (blessing) of salvation to all, including the most despised and outcast of society.' (Blomberg)

The most obvious pattern is: *Israel struggles to be a blessing to all people*—there are moments of **great hope** that they would be a **blessing**, as we see in King Solomon's life, but Israel and its leaders choose to be a bad witness of God to the world. This is clearly evidenced by their exile.

POINT 1: Being a channel of blessing is not just for Israel to fulfil, but we as the church, God's chosen people by the blood of Jesus, should know our lives overflow with God's blessings of love, mercy and grace.

APPLICATION: How are we choosing to be a blessing? How will we do it this year? How might God be stretching you and growing you to bless others?

Part 2: Kingship—foretaste and future

Unlike the kings we see in vv 7–12:

- King David was a murderer and an adulterer
- Solomon was guilty of idolatry, marrying foreign women and, ultimately, turning away from Yahweh, and that led to the kingdom's being torn in two during the reign of his son Rehoboam

.. Jesus, who is born in Royal David's city, gathers the lost sheep. He is the Good Shepherd. Born amongst the mess of this genealogy.

When we read about the miraculous acts of Jesus throughout the gospel, and the power he still demonstrates today through his followers, we can certainly say they are amazing *blessings*, but when we look closer, what Jesus was showing us in the miraculous is a foretaste of the future: the kingdom of God!

As the disciples witness, further in the gospel of Matthew (Matt 8:23–27), Jesus calming the storm, they say: 'What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!'

OR Jesus feeding the multitude of 4,000 and then 5,000

OR, my favourite is Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana

What is God showing us through Jesus? He is a KING that is not of this world, as he confesses to Pilate (John 18:28–40).

What comes to mind when you think of a King?

- Kingdom
- Power
- Authority

Point 2: But the greatest act / the greatest miracle we see Jesus, over and over, and even now, do, is to pardon / forgive sin. We know kings can pardon crimes, and even now people in government can do this, e.g. the American presidency: a presidential pardon. *This is where Jesus' kingship is on another level: he is a king who can rightly judge and pardon; but he doesn't just do that: he takes the punishment on behalf of his subjects—you and me and all who follow Jesus!*

APPLICATION: We get a foretaste of the Kingdom and God's chosen King today as we wait for our hope and faith in the future kingdom where our faith becomes sight!

As we read last week in Matt 2:3, Herod and Jerusalem were disturbed by news of Jesus' arrival: 'King of the Jews'. But to Magi mystics, to the leper, to the prostitute, to the tax collector, this was the greatest news!

So we learn already at this early stage of the life of Jesus that *the allegiances he will create will extend far beyond the boundaries of Judaism, while at the same time he will threaten and alienate many within those boundaries.* (Blomberg)

Will we today, this year, proclaim the **Good News of the King**: the one who was and is to come? The one who provided the perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the *whole* world? Will you be part of the kingdom building that this church is praying for?

Conclusion:

Let me read Romans 4:13–25:

¹³ It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. ¹⁴ For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, ¹⁵ because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

¹⁸ Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²² This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." ²³ The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, ²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

(This is why we can be confident to have **Hope** through the generations to come who put their trust in Jesus.)

The challenge is: will you go out into this world to be a blessing to proclaim the King who was and will come again? *This is a hope and prayer the generations before you and me prayed would be made known.*

Jesus the hope of salvation: to the illegitimate, the next generation...

PRAY

Epiphany 2

15th January 2023

Isaiah 49:1–7; Psalm 40:1–11; John 1:29–42

Sermon by Denise Nicholls

John 1:29–42

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me." ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.'

³² Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit." ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One.'

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, 'Look, the Lamb of God!'

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning round, Jesus saw them following and asked, 'What do you want?'

They said, 'Rabbi' (which means 'Teacher'), 'where are you staying?'

³⁹ 'Come,' he replied, 'and you will see.'

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter).

On Friday I went to see Elton John in concert [stir in congregation], and I thought of you, Rhonda, who's our great concert-goer. It was a really great concert. As the crowds were going in, there were very different types of folk there: lots of people my age, and our age, and younger—it was lovely to see some families, a little bit younger than me, with their teenagers: aw, they're very excited!

The crowd comprised of lots of different types of fans: there were people like me who just thought, I'd never seen him, I'd heard that this was his last concert, and my folks had given me some money, so rather than spend it on, I don't know, frivolous things like clothes or shoes, I thought, I'm going to go to a concert. Some fans were devotees, who knew every single word to every single song. Some were dressed up in some of Elton's more flamboyant costumes, in homage to the performer. Everyone was having a wonderful time.

Different types of people, different sorts of responses—what does this have to do with our Gospel reading for today? I've got three words for us: our key words are *see*, *show*, and *share*. Now you know it's usually me who makes these up, but I must give credit where credit is due: I actually read this on another minister's blog and I thought, that's a great little capture of what this scene is about.

We in Melbourne—and no doubt in the UK—have a passionate love for our footy. If we're involved in footy we love seeing our team. We all know that Rhonda's team is—[voice from congregation: Melbourne], the Demons. Now, who . . . Kaye's team is—Richmond. Who supports the Cats here? I know that was Elizabeth Ryder's . . . okay, a few people support the Cats. Any Swans supporters here? Oh, right, you and me, Barbara, that's it. But, you know with our footy teams there's 'trade week', and the scouts go around and they're looking for the Bright Young Things, or they're trying to poach people from other teams.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he points and says, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' The Lamb of God—the big guns are here, the big event is coming. That's what John is announcing. Now this phrase 'the Lamb of God' is only found in two places in all of Scripture, and both in this chapter of John's gospel. We know John's gospel is quite different from the synoptic gospels, which are quite similar; but John has a very different style, different language, and twice in this chapter Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God. In 1 Peter, Peter describes Jesus as being 'like a lamb', and in Revelation, John the Divine describes Jesus as a 'lamb that was slain'; but here, 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'

Now we who live on this side of the Cross and Resurrection have a number of images going around in our minds. Of course,

we think of Jesus, and knowing our scriptures, we think of him as the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for us on the cross. But the lamb was an image for Old Testament people, redolent of Passover imagery. Remember how at the first Passover in Egypt, the lamb was slaughtered and the blood put on the door posts and the lintel, so that the angel of death passed over God's Jewish people. Also in Isaiah, in the image of the Suffering Servant, a lamb figures. We also know that in the temple sacrifice in the Old Testament system there was a daily sacrifice for sin of a lamb. And, of course, that image of Abraham ready to sacrifice his only son Isaac, until a ram is seen, and God provides the lamb for sacrifice.

John says of Jesus, 'who takes away the sin of the world'—not just Jews. This means all people without distinction, Jews and non-Jews, ALL people of the earth, are, through faith, welcome in God's kingdom, through Jesus who takes away the sin of the world.

So John the Baptist points to Jesus. His whole life has been in preparation for this coming. Last week we saw how the testimony of John was that he spoke of Jesus, and Jesus being baptised by him. What he's saying here is that Jesus is the real deal. He saw the spirit of God come down upon him. And John confesses in this part, that we've just had read by Rhonda, 'I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit." I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One.' The coming one, the expected one, God's chosen one.

Then we're told that the next day John was there again with two of his disciples. We often forget that John had his disciples who followed him: disciples who were looking to God. Having seen God, and God's descent in the form of the Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus, John **shows** his own disciples, and **shares** with them, 'This is God's chosen one'. He had **seen** Jesus, he **showed** Jesus, and now he **shared** Jesus with even his disciples—not wanting his own tribe, but pointing, as he always did, to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Well, the two disciples of John go off and follow Jesus. And the very first words of Jesus in John's gospel account, is a question—as Jesus used powerfully questions right throughout his ministry. He says to those following him, 'What do you want?' Not sort of, you know, 'Can I help you?', or 'Who's next in line?', but that question of 'What is it that you are looking for in life? Ultimate meaning—what is it that you want?' We know that these two were wanting to follow God, and so Jesus invites them to come with him. They inquire, 'Where are you staying?'—not really just, you know, 'Are you staying in Heidelberg or in Watsonia?', but rather, 'We want to come and be with you'. And so, Jesus invites them into his new way of life.

You know, as a little person, I remember going home from the Salvation Army Sunday School. I must have been about six or seven. And Mum was peeling the potatoes for our Sunday roast. (Remember those? We used to have those all the time, and it was usually a lamb roast in our house—yum, yum, yum.) And I remember Mum said, 'How was Sunday school?' I said, 'Oh, it was good! I invited Jesus into my heart today.' Do you know, I forgot that instant until I was in my late twenties! When I had become a Christian in

my mid early- to mid-twenties, I had actually forgotten that time when as a little person I had said to Jesus, 'Yes!' We often speak about that time of our coming to know and understand who God is, and inviting Jesus into our heart and committing ourselves to him; but what we're doing is responding to Jesus' initial invitation for us to enter into his life, into his kingdom.

And so the disciples, the two disciples, align themselves with Jesus and stay with him. Now I love how Andrew, having seen Jesus, he wants to *show* and *share* this one who he thinks is the Messiah, with his nearest and dearest: with his brother Simon Peter (we know him as Simon Peter now when John's writing, but he was known as Simon back then). So when we have exciting news, who do we want to tell first? Our family! There's a new baby on the way, or a marriage, or anything else exciting; or even when the news is really hard, like a death, or a terrible health diagnosis—whom do we tell first? Those whom we love.

So, what does Andrew do? He brings Simon to Jesus. I love this because it's not like he has to convert his own brother, as it were, but he says, 'Come and see!' He's excited to think, this is the God-sent one. 'Come and see!' There's an invitation to be shared. What does he say to him? 'We've found the Messiah!'—and he brought him to Jesus. That's all he did: 'Come and see!'

Having *seen*, he wants to now *show* and *share*. I love how it says: *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. That's where Andrew's initial obedience finished. He just had to invite his brother to come.*

Now of course we know that the Gospel account tells us that *Jesus looked at him—looked at Simon—and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas',* which is translated *Peter* or *Rock* or *Rocky*. What a great nickname: Peter the Little Rocky. And that's where the account ends for us for today.

What about us? Having *seen* the goodness of Jesus, because we're here, because we follow him, because we gather as his people, having *shown* others that we are his followers, by coming to church—your friends and your neighbours know that you go to church each Sunday, don't they? Even if you've never told them they see you wander out, and come back. You're an ambassador, whether you like it or not—it's just whether we're a good one or not. But perhaps we've shown them by our good deeds that we are his followers.

You know I think there's a challenge for us here as God's Church in our parish for this coming year. I really felt it as I was preparing this sermon. We've talked about doing Alpha again. We want to be an invitational church community, that says to others, 'Come along, we just want to share Jesus with you. Come and see! Come and experience for yourself!' That's where our responsibility ends, in some way.

Of course we go on and we show ourselves to be Christ's disciples by our worship of him, by our service of our community, (whether they know it or not), in our prayers for them, and in our good works for them.

But those whom you know and love: are there those who don't yet know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour? We have our Alpha

series of films coming up, beginning on the 6th of Feb. All we have to do as faithful followers of Jesus is, when we have the opportunity, say to people, 'Would you like to come along?' Simple as that. It's up to them if they say yes or no. We can be praying for them.

You know when I first became a Christian, and a lot of my friends who'd known me through my University days were quite surprised [amused laughter], and when I'd go and spend time with them, I really felt the pressure: 'Oh dear Lord, I have to be a good witness for them, and I need to turn the conversation always around to, you know, "Come to Jesus! Give your life to Jesus!"' I felt this pressure upon myself in my visits with them, so that I wasn't really present, I was thinking all the time, 'How can I turn the conversation to God? How can I bring up Christian things with them?'

Then someone shared something very wise with me: 'Why don't you just pray that God provides an opportunity, and then, when God provides the opportunity, pray that you'll say one or two things, and then just leave it up to God?' I thought, 'That's right, it's up to God, isn't it? It's not actually up to me, it's up to God!' It transformed my time with my friends.

Now I would love to say that all of them have become Christians—not yet; but it actually meant that I was a better friend to them. I prayed for them. As I was going to visit them, I would pray, 'Lord please let there be an opportunity for me to speak about my faith, or to share you with them'; and you know, it meant that when I was there, I was just normal me! You know what I'm like, normal me [laughter]—well, semi-normal me—and it meant that I could relax with my friends. It meant that we could continue our friendship. And when, as it often did, an opportunity came up—you know, 'Oh, what's happening at your church?' or 'What are you doing?' or 'How's this impacting upon your life?'—and especially when I said, 'Well, I'm leaving teaching, I'm going to study theology, and I'll probably be off on a plane to Africa or America to do youth work (because remember, I came from Sydney, so I didn't have many models of women in churches), you know they were all a bit shocked, but they were all very interested, so I was able to share with them my journey of faith.

Having *seen* Jesus, having *shown* who we are by our whole lives, we have opportunities to *share*.

So do let me encourage you to be like Andrew: just, having *seen* the goodness of God, and experienced it in our lives, that we want to *show* and *share* Jesus with others. And—here's the ad!—we have our Alpha series of films coming up: free! free!! free!!! meal here at Holy Spirit Watsonia, beginning on Monday 6th February. There are lots of these invitation cards that you can give out: you were given one on the way in. Having *seen* Jesus, we want to *show* our love for him, and *show* others the goodness of God, and seek to *share* his goodness with those whom we know and love. That's my prayer for us as a church this year.

Well, last week I was told it was nine minutes—I'm not sure, my sermon was nine minutes. Where's Robin? Oh, he's not here today to time me. Hello Rob and Gay, if you're watching on livestream! I've been trying to, you know, hone my sermons down. I'm still in awe of the Archbishop of Canterbury at Queen Elizabeth's funeral, that he went for five and a half minutes. I haven't got to that yet but I'm working on it.

[Denise's sermon lasted 17 minutes and 54 seconds—Editor.]

Aboriginal Sunday

22nd January 2022

Deut 6: 1–12; Deut 32:7; Jer 22:15

Sermon by Jonathan Lopez

Deuteronomy 6:1–12

6 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

⁴ Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

¹⁰ When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you – a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant – then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹² be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Deuteronomy 32:7

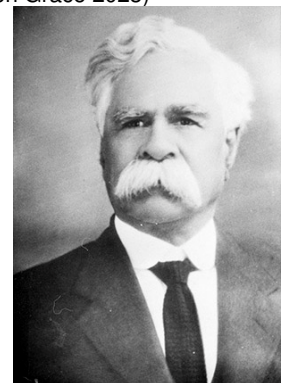
⁷ Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you.

Jeremiah 22:15

¹⁵ Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him.

Intro

Theme: Listening to the Voices of the Past (Common Grace 2023)



William Cooper 1860–1941

Yorta Yorta Man, Pastor, Advocate, Campaigner and Hero (whose grave is not too far from here: Coranderrk, near Healesville)

In a letter to the churches in 1938, 150 years after the arrival of the First Fleet, Yorta Yorta man and Pastor William Cooper called upon all Christian denominations to set aside

the Sunday before January 26th as Aborigines Day, what we now refer to as Aboriginal Sunday.

It was a day set aside for **prayer and reflection for Aboriginal people**, and as an acknowledgment and protest of *what was lost by the arrival of the Europeans*.

Quotes from William Cooper

'The land that was taken from [us] by the white race without compensation or even kindness'

Speaking to how different their future could have been:

'There is no excuse for the murders which were committed upon us. There is no excuse for taking a man's life away without cause. Yet if these [white] people had been different, how different already might have been our story!'

Speaking to the duty to care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

'Not only a moral duty, but also a strict injunction included in the commission issued to those who came to people Australia that the original occupants and we, their heirs and successors, should be adequately cared for'

Speaking for the need to pay for empowerment and education of Aboriginal People:

'You may ask where is the money to come from. But we have lost countless millions to the whites—the whole wealth of Australia. Are we not entitled to this? Must we lose our money as well as our lives?'



Sir Douglas Nicholls 1906–1988

Yorta Yorta Man (Yorta Yorta lands lie on both sides of the Murray River roughly from Cohuna to Albury/Wodonga. They include Echuca, Shepparton, Benalla, Corowa and Wangaratta and extend northwards to just south of Deniliquin), *Governor, Pastor, Professional Athlete, Advocate and Defender of Rights*.

Sir Douglas Nichols was the grand-nephew of William Cooper, and one of those to whom the baton was passed. As a professional athlete, he accomplished great feats in boxing, athletics and football, even winning a premiership with Northcote.

Sir Douglas became a pastor at the age of 30, and his compassion in how he tackled disadvantage led him to be known as a father figure in his community.

He participated in the 1938 'Day of Mourning' protests, and was instrumental in the 1967 referendum.

Sir Douglas would be highly decorated through his lifetime. He received an OBE, and MBE and a Knighthood. He was also made the Governor of South Australia: to date, Australia's only First Nations Governor.

He used his platform as an athlete, pastor and prominent Australian to draw attention to the needs of First Nations people and to secure their rights.

Quotes from Sir Douglas Nicholls

Speaking on the Aboriginal Day of Mourning, 1938:

'Aboriginal people are the skeleton in the cupboard of Australia's national life...outcasts in our own land.'

Preaching on why all should care about the plight of Aboriginal people:

'Firstly, we belong to a great family of God and he had made out of one blood all nations of men. Secondly, why you should bother about the Aborigines; we're part of the Great British Commonwealth of Nations. And thirdly, we want to walk with you. We don't wish to walk alone.'

Remembering our significant brothers and sisters today is important. Why? So we do not forget what God has taught us. In the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20 / Deut 5):

– *You shall not murder.*

– *You shall not steal.*

Today is about remembering, and as Moses taught Israel in v 12 in the first reading: ¹² *be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

We are not to forget what God has TAUGHT and what God has DONE!

The second reading (Deut 32:7) calls us to remember what has been TAUGHT to us; Jer 22:15 is a warning if we don't remember: King Josiah's son Shallum before his exile.

Part 1: What God teaches and has done

The Deut 6 reading today has **huge** significance for Jews and Christians.

V1 highlights the Ten Commandments that are to be taught amongst believers and that our beliefs, *given by God*, are to be passed down from generation to generation.

The missionaries and believers that shared the gospel to our brothers, William Cooper and Doug Nicholls, are **significant** examples of belief in God transcending ethnic and cultural divisions. William and Doug are spiritual children, like you and me. WE are recipients of the gospel that has transformed us into children of Abraham (Rom 4:16).

Some might ask: why this passage to preach on on Aboriginal Sunday?

Well along with remembering what is **taught** to us is what *God has done* for us.

For Israel (in context) they have been set free from slavery by Egypt and WE today have been set free from sin and death (Rom 8:2).

I want to make just one added point to the message today. The most central part of our faith is:

Part 2: How have our hearts changed since coming to faith?

After the 'Prayer of Preparation' in the Second Order Communion Service in APBA are said these familiar words:

⁴ *Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one.* ⁵ *Love the Lord your God with all your HEART and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

Now are these the exact words used?

Well they are not. 'Love God with all your *mind*' is an inclusion from the Gospel writers and absent in our Deut reading today.

Now I am not trying to trip you up as faithful Anglicans, NO. It is to point to something that ties Jews, Christians, William and

Doug, you and me together is this great command:

LOVE God with

ALL your heart

ALL your soul

ALL your strength

Remember Jesus quoted these words to religious leaders and lawyer at the time when asked: what is the greatest law? (Matt 22:37–38; Mark 12:29–30; Luke 10:27)

So what is the point? Well, in Jewish thought, *The heart (lēb) is, in Old Testament anthropology, the seat of the intellect, equivalent to the mind or rational part of human-kind.* (Merrill)

We have often been taught that the heart was just emotions. For the younger: where 'the feels' come from.

Why bring this up? Well, we are often taught to compartmentalise: left brain (logic) and right brain (creative); and what God seems to have been trying to get Moses to teach was *that our love for God must come from the heart: emotions and logic.*

As Christians we often might get written off as people open to being manipulated by some religious crazy leader through our emotions, our heart, but these two verses Deut 6:4–5 tell us it is through the LOVE of God both taught to us and shown to us that our hearts are TRANSFORMED and desire to follow God's ways with our very essence and expression.

For Jews today, they are taught to recite these two verses regularly (twice daily). It is what is called the Shema (hear): what rabbis called the 'heart of the law'.

APPLICATION / Conclusion

After hearing Auntie Jean, a faithful believer, whom I have met, and know of the great work she has done: how is God still transforming your heart towards our First Nations People?

Share: last week I conducted a wedding where the mother of the groom spoke to me about her church's work with a First Nations people group of the Philippines: the Aeta. They work with health care, welfare and restoring sight to Aeta. I told her that I actually would not have been born if it were not for the Aeta. My grandfather was a POW during the Japanese invasion of the Philippines and was to be beheaded. He managed to get away from the camp and was hidden in the forest in a place called Bataan by the Aeta people so he could get back to our family's home town.

Today we might not know the direct impact First Nations people have had to our own stories. In the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent visit to Melbourne, in his sermon, upon reflecting on the 'not so great' history of caring for Indigenous people, he said we might ponder and wonder the acts of our forebears 'I wish they didn't say or do that' to the First Nations people. We are to remember today what Jesus taught and affirmed, the shema, **but** he radically reminded us from Lev 19:18: *And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'*

Today we have a chance to re-write some wrongs through reconciliation. How are we loving of neighbour? How can we love the Indigenous people of the many nations in this land? Will you take some first steps towards this? I'd love to speak with you after the service of how this might be possible.

PRAY