

St John the Baptist Anglican Church

Newsletter December 2015

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From Michael...

Christmas time is a mixed experience for some people. In the midst of the many "happy" and "merry" greetings, some are very aware of the gaps in their life. Loved ones no longer with them, end of year retirement for others, family members overseas, the absence of children, so while those around them are full of the joy of the Christmas Season, they feel even more lonely and isolated.

When working as a hospital chaplain, I was distressed to find the hospital had a policy of setting aside extra beds for the expected suicide attempts that come at Christmas and New Year. "If I am not able to be happy at this time of the year, when can I be happy?" Making an effort to offer friendship and hospitality will be part of our care for others at this time of the year.

All members of our family will all be gathering with us in Auckland to welcome our most recent grandchild, (niece, cousin, for others). Our single daughter, who works in Singapore, has adopted a little girl from Ethiopia and after much paper work, anxious waits and many prayers, her daughter has been granted New Zealand citizenship and now holds a New Zealand Passport, without which she would not have been allowed into the country to share this Christmas with us. We have all waited with bated breath for many months for this to happen and now we can all be together.

As you will appreciate, such an experience at this personal level has heightened our awareness of the needs of refugees and those who might seek to come to New Zealand or other countries where they might find safety, security and hope. We have also felt the enormity of the many children who remain in orphanages around the world and the reality of child neglect and abuse within our own country.

Our daughter has called her little girl Grace. The word "grace" comes from a Greek word "charis" (from

which we have the word "charity"). It means love given freely, not gained by merit, but a gift.

At the heart of the good news that Jesus brings to the world, is the truth that God's love is not something we can earn or gain by works of merit, rather is a free gift (grace) which we can reject or accept, but never earn. To welcome refugees and new comers to our country is a practical expression of our understanding of "the grace of God". Such a welcome is much more demanding than a fleeting greeting on arrival, but calls for long term and sustained openness to others which may not come easily or readily. The journey into acceptance and integration is a long one, for all involved. This journey requires much grace with a variety of practical expressions.

As we gather with family and friends, as we share in our services and celebrations of God, revealing Divine character in Jesus, let us be open to those who for various reasons might feel on the "outer", those who might as it were "find no room in the Inn". We may be able to do something neighbour to neighbour at a level of hospitality, or make a donation to one of the several charities like Christian World Service, our local Anglican City Mission or Anglican Trust for Women and Children working in South Auckland.

This is a season to be jolly and a season to be gracious, and a time to deeply value and appreciate the difference in the world because millions of people in the past and now, have, like us received the Christ Child into their hearts and minds and tried to love others with the quality of love, with which God freely loves us.

A Blessed Christmas to you all. It's fun to be with you.

Michael Smart

In and around St Johns

Sunday Services: 8am, 9.30am, Eucharist
5pm (study/discussion group)

Sunday School: 4th Sunday of the month at 9.30am

Evening Women's Fellowship: 7.30pm 2nd Tuesday of the month

Men's Breakfast & Bible Group: 7.15-8.15am fortnightly on a Thursday.

Craft Group: Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesday 1.30pm in the St Jude's Room

Hall Users

Positive Balance Yoga - Mon, Tues, Thurs evenings, 5.45pm – 7pm or 7pm – 8.15pm in term time.

Rowe Dance - ballet classes for 3-8 year olds on Monday morning, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons in term time.

Jumping Beans - Tues 9am – 12pm in term time

Scottish Country Dance - Wed 7.30pm – 10pm in term time.

Place for children minded by **Barnados** care givers – Thurs morning, fortnightly in term time

Alcoholics Anonymous support group – each Fri evening

English Folk Dance - 2nd Fri each month, 7.30 – 10pm

Early English Dance - last Fri each month, 7.30 – 10pm

Soccer for Tots - Sat 9am – 1pm during term time

AlAnon family support group – the afternoon of the first Sun of each month.

Shore Stitchers - 3rd Sun each month 11am – 3pm

Monthly public health clinic in the St Jude's Room to administer **BCG injections**

Readings for the month

December 6 Advent 2

Reading: Philippians 1: 3-11

Gospel: Luke 3: 1-6

December 13 Advent 3

Various with Carols

December 20 Advent 4

Reading: Hebrews 10: 5-10

Gospel: Luke 1: 39-56

December 24 Christmas Eve

Gospel: John 1: 1-14

December 25 Christmas Day

and December 27 1st Sunday after Christmas

Colossians 3: 12-17

Gospel: Luke 2: 41-52

January 3 2016 Epiphany

Psalm 146

Gospel: John 1: 1-14

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND EVENTS

Thursday 24th December: 5pm – Children's Play and Carols

Christmas Eve: 11.30pm Eucharist (Carols from 11.15pm)

Christmas Day: 9am Eucharist (note the time and only one service)

Sunday after Christmas (27th December) and from then until end of January, one service: 9.30am Eucharist.



END OF YEAR THANKS

A parish community is sustained by many contributions in many different ways from everyone. As we come to the end of the year, I encourage you all to allow yourself to recognise your own and others many gifts, the many hours, the mutual support and financial contributions that make for our parish life. The conversations, interest in each other and practical help go well beyond ourselves through our interaction with the wider community. Well done and while Sunday services will continue in January, it is good to take some rest and relaxation. (Michael)

GIFT TO PARISH OF 50 NEW ZEALAND PRAYER BOOKS

A parishioner has gifted 50 copies of the complete edition of The New Zealand Prayer Book. This offer came uninvited and was made to the Wardens and myself. This will give us a resource for worship that I am sure any new Vicar will be pleased to have and before then we can "explore" its various options of prayers, canticles, poems and alternative services other than The Liturgies of the Eucharist which we have had till now. There were only a few copies left in New Zealand as a reprint is not due until 2017, so we were fortunate to obtain some of the last copies sourced from several Anglican Bookshops throughout the country. I am personally very grateful to our donor and given the applause by the 8am congregation, others are also very appreciative. (Michael)

FOOD BANK

Thank you for the change to Christmas fare. The celebration is not far away as we are reminded by the lovely decoration of our church.

Christmas time can be and is a very hard time for quite a number of our community so the little bit extra will be most appreciated in the needy circles.

The Women's Evening Fellowship have very generously donated \$100 to the food bank for "Christmas Cheer". Thank you very much - your donation will be well used.

It seems strange to be writing this now (November) but the Festival is almost here so happy happy Christmas to you all, have a lovely time hopefully with family, remembering who is in the cradle!

Matthew Davies.

CHURCH MAINTENANCE

The required inspection of the vicarage has been carried out and the Maintenance Committee is arranging quotes to get the interior refreshed, replacement of stove and dishwasher and electrical work (lighting, etc.) just to name the major items.

Other work (painting, etc.) around the complex has not been forgotten and will be attended to probably in the New Year as everything "gets going" again.

A happy and safe Christmas to you all.

Matthew Davies.



RUBBISH BAGS

As you all know, plastic shopping bags (the bigger ones) are placed in rubbish bins in both kitchens as tidy liners.

I have virtually exhausted my supply at home and would appreciate it if everyone would put their spare bags, as an ongoing project, in the food bank basket please. I will see to it they are made available to the cleaners.

Thank you in advance.

Matthew Davies.

SEEKING A VICAR

The position has been advertised and the Bishop has invited priests to indicate their interest. A short list will then allow for interviews in late January. It might then enable an announcement in February. Depending on the selected person's present position it could be a couple of months before the person takes up the appointment.

Contacts**Priest-in-Charge:**

Archdeacon Michael Smart Home: 476 7452

Wardens

Vicar's Warden: Doug Dempster 418 1448

People's Warden: Pru Giles 489 1998

Pastoral Care: Karen Perrett 418-3715**Synod Representatives**

Rosemary Saunders 489 5830

Tristan Sullivan-Vaughan 480 8064

Hall Hire

Richard Lewis 419 9026

Recorder

Wendy McPherson 473 3448

Women's Fellowship

Rosemary Saunders 489 5830

Catering Committee

Barbara McIlroy 418 4117

Office Admin, Newsletter and Website

Natalie Mason 480 7568

Your newsletter is prepared by Natalie. You can contact Natalie on 480 7568 or you can email her at sjbanglican@gmail.com. The newsletter is published on the first Sunday of the month and the deadline for submissions is the 25th of the previous month.

Solutions to last month's puzzle

You will walk in the ways of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land.

Prov 2:20-21 N.I.V.



ETERNAL LIFE, MY FAVORITE ... THANKS JESUS!

Cryptogram

Another Cryptogram for you to attempt! Remember that basically the trick is to start with common small words and progress up to bigger less common words.

BIBLE-CRYPTOVERSE (Scripture verse in code) No.11

X	F	S	Z	J	L	R	R	N	W	H	S	X	J	L	R	R	U	F	J	L	Y		
M	U	E	E	J	S	T	S	D	,	Y	M	U	E	E	U	H	Z	T					
L	R	U	F	J	C	F	S	G	H	X	U	Y	N	J	;	E	R	U	W	Z	R	J	S
J	L	R	F	S	M	K	J	L	U	J	Y	H	L	Y	C	L	R	F	J	L	U	N	Y

Letter used:

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