



St Stephen's Uniting Church in the city

In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity



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Editorial

Christmas is now just two weeks away, and given what the year 2020 has brought in the way of anxiety and trouble into the lives of people in Australia and around the world, we could be forgiven for not perhaps experiencing to the same degree that feeling of general peace and goodwill which comes with the season. However, truth to tell, we at St Stephen's do not feel this way, although we could be forgiven for adopting this attitude. Instead we look forward with keen anticipation to this special time when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, for this birth represents new beginnings as well as fresh hope and optimism. This time of joy and celebration will no doubt prove to be even more meaningful to us this year, as we gather with family and friends to remember and honour the coming into the world of "The Prince of Peace" who is the source of all our hope.

Lauris and I suggested to members and friends that they might like to write on the following Christmas themes for this Summer Issue: *Which aspects or parts of the Christmas story resonate with you? or What aspects of Christmas celebrations hold a particular significance for you?* The insightful responses we have received will, we feel, arouse your keen interest and invite some reflection on your part!

Despite the restrictions imposed upon us due to Covid-19, we have had two particularly memorable church services since the printing of our Spring Edition. The first such service was the Commissioning of the Elders, held on the 25th October, and a special guest at that service was Andrew McCloud, the Tertiary Ministry Organiser at Sydney Presbytery. On the 29th November, the annual Kirkin' O' the Tartan service took place, and members and friends of our congregation again were delighted to hear the wonderful sound of the bagpipes and witness the wearing of traditional Scottish kilts and plaids.

Another important event in the life of our church was the Organ and Trumpet Concert, held on the afternoon of the 22nd November. This was a special tribute to a former member of our congregation, Janna Dickers, who passed away on the 17th April. We are grateful to four members of our congregation who wrote up the special services, and our sincere thanks go to Ron Mallyon for his wonderful photos.

In this edition, we are introducing a new column, in which we invite members to talk about their favourite hymn and to explain why this particular sacred song holds a special meaning for them. Graham Penn is the first to participate and he has chosen to focus on his favourite Christmas Carol. We look forward to discovering more about our favourite hymns in coming issues and to finding out why particular hymns appeal to certain people.

The Harpers were able to continue their ministry in Jindabyne, as the Alpine Uniting Church re-opened. Lauris reflects on a different sort of ministry this year, and indeed in general on how Covid has and has not affected country congregations with whom we have contact. Also, Narromine has invited St Stephen's for a visit to them in 2021.

This issue will enable us to get to know two more members of our congregation better through their article entitled "In Our Own Words". Ron and Barbara Mallyon have kindly consented to write up the stories of their lives for us, and we are sure that readers will be very interested to discover more about these valued members of our church family.

Finally, there will be quite a number of current and former members of the St Stephen's congregation who will remember Janna Dickers, who was a regular worshipper at our church over a significant number of years and who was particularly fond of organ music. In this edition of "Vision", we pay a special tribute to Janna and celebrate her long life. We also extend our sincere sympathy to all Janna's friends and in particular, to her good friend Paul Breedveld.

Janice Dawson



From the Minister



We are approaching the time when we will rise toward heaven. I could be referring to the great day of the advent of Jesus Christ, but my mind at this moment is on the rising of the lift when it arrives and is installed into the St Stephen's Uniting building very soon. So much has taken place in improving the building this year so that accessibility and lighting and sound will be improved. One of the photos shows a pendant light lowered to the aisle. All the lights have been renewed in their electrical works and efficiency. We are certainly a growing city church and thank God for our location and community.



The words to us in 2020 from the early church in the 50s CE remain constant. The Rev Andrew Collis writes: "Our reading is part of a letter written by the apostle Paul to a church in Thessalonica (Greece). It may be the oldest piece of writing we have in the New Testament. The key words can help to frame a picture of the early church. Rejoice always. Pray constantly. Give thanks to the God of peace. Test the prophecies/teachings with an eye to goodness. Don't stifle/stop inspiration."

As I write to you and, with Sue, send you Christmas greetings, may that phrase from Thessalonians, "with an eye to goodness", be part of our daily living as we await the advent of Christ.

Rev Ken Day



And so this is Christmas

It was the weekend before Christmas last year. Lauris and I had promised to be in Narromine for the weekend and, rather than do the long drive there one day, and the same long drive in reverse the next day, we booked to travel by train.

As the weekend approached, the maelstrom of fires which had been brewing for months, and would reach its frightening crescendo on New Year's Eve, was growing more threatening. A text message advised that the Main Western railway line had been cut by fires and our train would be replaced by road coaches. A stop in Lithgow for coffee brought us close to the reality of the Gospers Mountain fire, its proximity to the city of Lithgow immediately evident as its plume of smoke darkened the sky. Just west of Lithgow, from the coach we saw a fire beside the Great Western Highway. We got through just before the road was closed behind us.

It was, as always, wonderful to see our many friends in the Narromine church, but there was a pall over the town. It was almost unbearably hot as so much of last summer was. The town had endured the scorching heat for days. There had been a number of dust storms, the inevitable concomitant of the drought which had devastated so much of the country, leaving the precious topsoil to the mercy of the violent winds whipped up by the heat. People had stopped trying to keep the dust out of their houses, because it could breach any barrier, and render futile every effort to remove it. And while there were no fires in the immediate vicinity, the smell of smoke was ever present, and the potential for conflagration in the tinder-dry country was on everyone's mind.

As we sat in our sweltering motel room, trying to coax just a little relief out of an ancient air conditioner, the tv news reported that the Great Western

Highway was still cut. Would we be able to get home the next day? Would we make it home for Christmas at all, just four days off?

Poor us? Hardly. We were not sheltering in an evacuation centre somewhere, wondering if our home still stood, whether our livelihood was still intact. Nor were we among the courageous men and women risking their lives to try to battle the ubiquitous and treacherous fires.

But it was hard to avoid thinking, Christmas isn't supposed to be like this. Even in 21st century Australia, much of our Christmas imagery still features snowflakes, reindeer and a large bearded chap in a red winter suit. One of our carols features shepherds



“on a cold winter's night that was so deep”. Even if we've escaped those hangovers from a northern hemisphere Christmas, we like Christmas to be *nice*, to be *relaxed*, to be neatly gift-wrapped in tinsel and ribbons and baubles. We even sanitise the story of the birth of the Christ child in what must have been a gritty, unhygienic and precarious animal shelter. On our Christmas cards, everybody is nicely dressed, the mother who has just given birth is afforded an instant recovery from her labours, the sky resonates with the choruses of angels, and soon the stable is bedecked with the extravagant gifts of foreign dignitaries. And “Glory shone around”.

How could such a Christmas break in on the frightening, sweltering, dirty and dangerous world that was NSW at the end of December in 2019? Christmas just isn't supposed to be like that!

It was that jarring juxtaposition which caused the penny to drop for me for the first time. Christmas *is like that!* It is we who have lost the plot when we take the grit and the danger and the suffering out of Christmas. The Christ child was indeed born amongst the muck and the grime of a stable. Like any first time mother, Mary will have faced the pain and the danger of childbirth in appallingly



greetings, or admire the excessive array of Christmas lights in which we've wrapped our houses. God did not come to munch on Christmas cake and mince pies, to shed a sentimental tear as we sing our traditional carols, or listen to the uplifting sermon on Christmas Day. The glory of Christmas is that Jesus came, as one of us, into the *real* world. In December 2019, Jesus came to share the sweltering heat, to breathe the acrid air, to stand alongside the courageous fire crews, to bring comfort in the evacuation centres, to share in the grit and the danger and the fear. Jesus did not ask us to clear our "to do" lists before Christmas, or to dress nicely to receive him, or to try to disguise our hardships and our weaknesses and our shortcomings.

inadequate conditions. Infant mortality everywhere was huge, and human life was cheap. Tradition has it that Jesus' family was poor, and there is nothing romantic or edifying about poverty. Poverty leaches the spirit. On the throne of Judaea sat the ruthless Herod the Great; behind him stood the equally ruthless Romans. The times were perilous. There was nothing ideal about the world into which Jesus was born.

And that is the point. That is the glory of Christmas. God himself did not take on human form to come and sit at our over-laden Christmas lunch tables, or gather around the tree while we exchange gifts and



The wonder of Christmas is that Jesus came into our world, just as it is. Jesus came to *us*, just as we are.

The glory of the Lord which shone at Christmas was not an ethereal glow which cast out the reality of the real world. The true glory of the Lord is that it shines into our darkest places, and beckons to us with hope and love.

Alan Harper OAM

A Muted Year



I recently bought an absolutely hideous dress. It is by far the tackiest piece of clothing I have ever owned (and that includes my teen Supreme phase). The top half is fairly inoffensive, a silky chiffon black wrap around style with an empire waist. So far, so good. But the rest... horrendous!

The base colour of the skirt is bright red. Not a rosy red or a dark sultry red or any shade of red usually associated with clothing. Rather, it's the type of red that Playschool presenters use to teach toddlers their primary colours.

Ringed around the border of this shock of vermilion is a series of badly drawn snowflakes inexplicably hanging by cobweb-like threads (rather than falling without suspension, as they do in nature). These are surrounded by what I can only assume is meant to represent snow, but could equally be a rejected Jackson Pollock.

At this point, I imagine you have a pretty good idea of where I am going here, but indulge me a touch longer as we welcome to the stage the headline act of this atrocious dress: a large number of cartoon penguins. Don't get me wrong, I am a big fan of penguins. I just don't generally wear them on my person, particularly penguins with top hats and scarves who are dancing with snowmen on skates.

This is Christmas at its kitchiest.

Given my apparent disdain for the dress which I did not, for the record, purchase sight unseen, you might be wondering what on earth possessed me to buy it? Debating the possible answer to that question has taken up the bulk of my internal monologue over the past few weeks and I finally think I've figured it out.

You see, if you'd asked me in any ordinary year which aspects or parts of the Christmas story resonate with me, I would usually say the quiet unexpectedness of Jesus' birth - the coming of the

Saviour in a stable, the unlikely parents, the administrative nature of their journey to Bethlehem, the complete lack of pomp and ceremony but the abundance of livestock, the random shepherds who get a front row ticket to an incredible celestial event.

I love the hushed things of Christmas - the solemn and awe inspiring carols, the midnight mass, the lighting of candles, the careful drafting of Christmas cards, the silence in the car home from the family lunch. While I am not an unenthusiastic participant in Christmas festivities and admittedly own quite a few Christmas earrings, I am usually not the sort of person who wears a dress with Christmas penguins on it.

But this year, that is exactly that sort of person I am.

Because this has been a quiet, hushed year - marked by isolation, uncertainty and sorrow. From the abandoned towns wrecked by fire, to the families separated by distance, from the ghostly office towers to the empty churches where hymns ring out no more. This year has been muted enough (on Zoom calls and otherwise!)

So this Christmas I want to be loud, to be bold, to be unafraid to shout out that Christ has come, hope is at hand, the Saviour is here! And I want to wear my awful dress so that people say, "I guess you must really like Christmas!" To which I hope I will reply: "Yes, yes I do, because at Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, and without Jesus this year would have been awful!"

Despite fire and flood, pandemic and strife, and all that has kept us unable to look away from the news - to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And He shall reign forever and ever.

Hallelujah! Hosanna! Amen!



Katherine Buchan

Personal Christmas Reveries



Aspects of the Christmas Story which Resonated this Year

The year 2020 has been unprecedented in recent times for the pervading sense of uncertainty, fear and loss it has brought to many lives. The phrase “the world has gone mad” is one which has been uttered frequently, as governments and leaders globally have failed to restore the sense of calm and sanity that was sought.



On revisiting the Christmas Story this year, what resonated with me was the journey of faith undertaken by the main characters through difficult and challenging situations from the Annunciation to Mary of an

unforeseen pregnancy through to the birth in a stable in Bethlehem. Such a journey of faith involved the Wise Men travelling long distances from the East as well as the Shepherds, filled with fear initially, exhorting each other to visit the newborn Christ after the angel visitation.

And so the Christmas story this year resonates again with a message of the continuation of one's own journey of faith through challenging times with hope, and encouraged by the words of Zechariah from Luke 1:78-79:

..."Through the tender mercy of our God, when the day shall dawn upon us from on high, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace".

Romany Russell

Christmas Celebrations which hold a Particular Significance to Me

Christmas has always been a very special time of the year to me. Being raised in the church in Tennessee, each year, there would be special songs sung, plays performed, nativity scenes enacted and other extra events introduced as part of our December worship.

In addition to these church functions, there are three aspects of Christmas celebrations that hold particular significance to me.

Connection - During the month of December, I feel an extra special connection to family and friends, both here in Australia and in the US. I reach out more to people in my life through phone calls, Facetime chats and sending Christmas cards. I also enjoy hosting family and friends at our home a bit more during the Christmas season.

Giving - Giving to others is another aspect of Christmas that I especially enjoy. Whether it is helping our children select and give gifts to family and people less fortunate than us, or spending time thinking about and shopping for gifts to give to family and friends. Giving seems to be more salient in my mind during the Christmas season.



Last, but certainly not least, listening to Christmas music is a very special aspect of the season I enjoy. I like very much to listen to some traditional, more secular carols, but really enjoy listening to spiritual Christmas music. Michael W Smith and Amy Grant are two of my favourite Christian artists who have produced a significant volume of Christmas music. Kurt has also developed a love of Christmas music and we enjoy singing Christmas music together.

Scott Brunelle

What Christmas Celebrations Mean to Me

This year, I was lucky enough to sit on a panel at the Body Shop's launch of their Christmas campaign. The Body Shop has partnered with Launch Housing and is aiming to raise awareness about female homelessness in Australia – the leading cause of which is domestic and family violence. I was able to use the opportunity to talk about my work in the Domestic Violence Unit at Legal Aid, and to raise awareness about supporting and advocating for victims of domestic and family violence. I joined some amazing, strong women on the panel – journalist Jan Fran, journalist and author Jess Hill and music artist Siala who was a contestant on "The Voice" and at the time living in a refuge having fled domestic and family violence with her mother and five siblings. Talk about feeling out of my depth! But one of the questions I was asked to talk about was how I will be celebrating Christmas and what Christmas means to me. Not long after that, Janice asked me to write a few words for Christmas Vision. Surely that can't be a coincidence?! God works in amazing ways!

Now while I love Christmas presents and a good sago plum pudding with all the toppings (custard, ice cream and brandy sauce!) – for me, Christmas is a time for reflection, giving, joy and being thankful for the reason we celebrate Christmas.

As most know, my husband and I practise different religions and sometimes having different faith journeys at times like Christmas can be difficult. Sharing the Christmas message with him and the respect he has for my faith is a special part of our relationship.

When thinking about what aspects of Christmas celebrations hold special significance for me, I couldn't really pinpoint particular aspects – what resonated was just how very special it is being able to rejoice in the season with my family and friends.

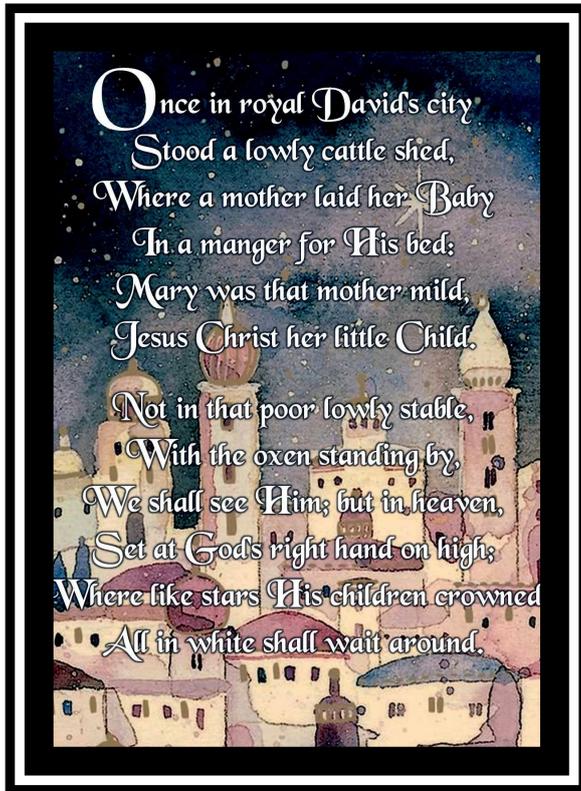
I'm looking forward to celebrating Christmas with all at St Stephen's. Merry Christmas!

Peace, love and joy.

Anna Baltins

Rejoice

My Favourite Advent Hymn



Once in Royal David's City

I love this carol not only because of the beautiful harmony of the tune, but because of the simple but powerful lyrics. The words speak of the birth, the life, and the ministry of Jesus.

***Once in royal David's city
 Stood a lowly cattle-shed,
 Where a mother laid her Baby
 In a manger for His bed.
 Mary was that mother mild,
 Jesus Christ her little child.***

The words of *Once in Royal David's City* were written in 1848 by Dublin-born Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander, wife of William Alexander, a bishop in the Church of Ireland. It was set to music the following year by the English organist and noted hymn composer Henry John Gauntlett.

Cecil was one of the great Irish hymn writers, who taught profound Biblical truths through their po-

ems, songs and hymns. In most of her hymns, Cecil points to God's eternal plans with the hope of heaven and the life to come.

Recently, in the Home Worship Resources for the Festival of St Andrew, Reverend Ken spoke about another one of Cecil's much loved hymns, "Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult".

Cecil was deeply troubled by the shallowness of the songs children were singing in the Sunday schools in Victorian times. She believed that if children continued to sing songs without any scriptural truth or depth, their faith would not last them into adulthood. So Cecil wrote many hymns for children believing that it was the best way to teach them the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Cecil used the central truths of the Apostles' Creed to form the basis of a number of her hymns, which gave children the opportunity to hear, memorize and absorb the core Christian beliefs that are expressed in the creed.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth" is reflected in the words of the hymn *All Things Bright and Beautiful*; "Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary" forms the basis of the words of *Once in Royal David's City*; and "Was crucified, dead and buried" is reflected in the words of the Easter hymn *There is a Green Hill Far Away*.

Today, *Once in Royal David's City* continues to be a favourite carol sung in churches around the world as it tells the events of our Saviour's birth and provides a simple way to remember that Jesus, although divine, had once been a child just like us.

*He came down to earth from heaven
Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable,
And his cradle was a stall.
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.*

*For He is our childhood's pattern:
Day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak and helpless;
Tears and smiles like us He knew;
And He feeleth for our sadness,
And He shareth in our gladness.*

Although Christmas is the celebration of Christ's incarnation, Cecil Alexander recognized the need to frame Jesus' birth in the light of eternity.

*And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heaven above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.*

In another recent Home Worship Resource, Ken spoke about a verse from this hymn that is now often omitted. In the verse, Cecil stressed that "*Christian children all **must** be mild, obedient, good as He*". But we know that children are not always like this and regardless of their (and our) failings they (and we) are still loved by Jesus.

I first learnt *Once in Royal David's City* in Infants' School in the early 1960s. It was because of the Infants Mistress Eleanor McNabb, a Presbyterian, that hymns were regularly taught and sung at school assemblies. I have very clear memories of children sitting cross legged in perfectly aligned rows and singing these hymns with gusto – probably not always in tune.



I also have fond memories of Sunday School nativity plays where this hymn was incorporated in telling the story of Jesus' birth. I always wanted to be a wise man but inevitably ended up as a shepherd.

In my adult years, I find the singing of *Once in Royal David's City at the beginning of a Carol Service quite moving*. The superb arrangement by David Willcocks with its unaccompanied soprano/treble solo is most famously sung by the choir of Kings College, Cambridge at the start of their annual Christmas Eve Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.



Musical Treats



As part of the Nativity scene set up in our home, I designed an art work that incorporates the first and last verses of *Once in Royal David's City*. It reminds us that Jesus came into the world as a helpless baby and as our Lord and Saviour we look forward to the time when we will see Him in Heaven.

***Not in that poor lowly stable,
With the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high,
When, like stars, His children crowned
All in white shall wait around.***

Graham Penn

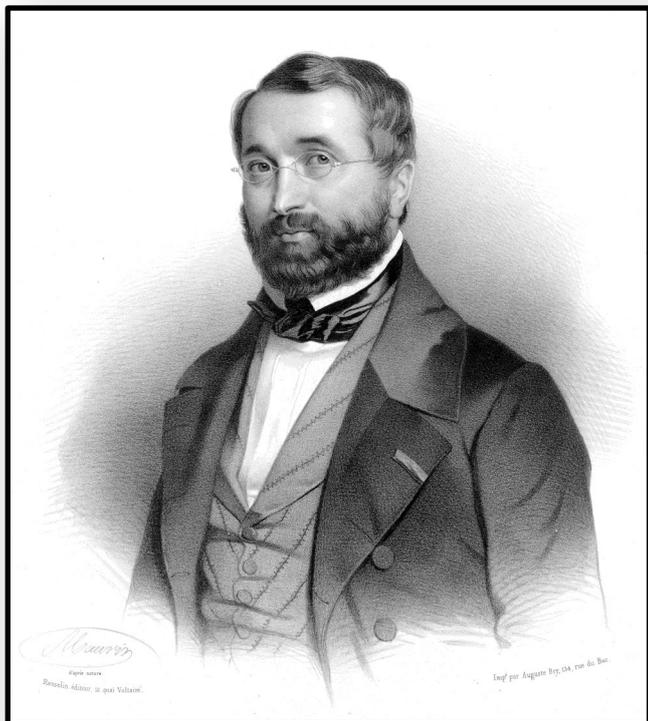
We are all ill at ease this year. We must therefore hold steadfast to that which centres us in place and time, even our little Christmas indulgences. For me one treat is performing Adolphe Adam's "O Holy Night". In my time, it has become a "petite tradition" at St Stephen's.

The work was popularized for much of the general public by the indomitable Mariah Carey on her imaginatively titled multiplatinum album, "Merry Christmas". Ms Carey sold over 15 million copies, unwittingly, lucratively, plastering it like so much sonic wallpaper all over shops and dentists' waiting rooms. I cannot but help to hold her in warm regard though: popularising the song by force of talent; rendering it, as she did, a rightful Christmas staple for so many. I'm not alone. Our vocal scholars past and present have counted themselves among the Carey disciples, using my serious rehearsals of the original to share their Mariah impersonations. They know who they are.

As for our friend, the original composer Monsieur Adams, he had to promise his father that he wouldn't pursue a career in music in order to attend the Paris Conservatoire. Adding to Papa's rancour, he took home mere Silver from the "Prix de Rome", the premiere international composition prize. Pitiless parents notwithstanding, by his early 20s Adolphe was banging out tunes for Parisian vaudeville houses and playing in the orchestra at the Gymnase Dramatique, where he later became chorus master. I doubt such a man would have hated Mariah's honeyed ornaments cascading down the David Jones escalators. That is the nature of great music: once birthed it is everyone's baby.

Its beginnings were inauspicious. It was commissioned in 1843 to celebrate the renovation of a church organ in Roquemaure, a town of about five thousand in the last census. (We composers take work as it comes). A local poet wrote extravagantly about Christ the Redeemer (in French, of course, this was France). Adam set it to music, *Chanteuse* Emily Laurey sang it, and Bob's your

at Christmas



Adolphe Adams by Maurin (Wikimedia Commons—beyond copyright)



Roquemaure church west—CCO 1.0 open licence

uncle: a hit. Well, not quite. It might have languished in that little village forever but for unlikely Adolphe Adams fan, Unitarian minister John Sullivan Dwight, humble editor of Dwight's Journal of Music. He translated the song (I've no idea where he got the copy) into English in 1855. Then, up from Dwight's Boston base, your uncle Bob did slowly pop. Adam's tune picked up steam, re-spreading ex America in various guilty-pleasure arrangements.

How do we abet this arc of bowdlerisation at St Stephen's? Our modest arrangement still leverages a solo singer, or two (last Christmas we had the wonderful team of Alex & Natasha, partners in life and music). We also had the pleasure of Jo Baée on Harp. I don't know whether I like conducting it in spite of, or because of all the colourful guises the work has known, but it remains true that it is small but significant part of what makes Christmas special for me. This year I will hold the score closer to my chest than ever before. I think that's true for many of us.

Suw Belling

Commissioning of Elders



On a cold, wet, blustery Sunday, the Congregation of St Stephen's met in the warmth of fellowship for a service that included the Commissioning of Elders.

Two beautiful pieces of music by J S Bach led us into the time of worship - the Minuets in G & G minor played on the Celesta by Mark and the Allemande from Partita No.2 in D minor for solo violin played by guest violinist Tracy Wan.

The lighting of the Christ Candle reminded us that we are always in the presence of Christ and that His light is in us. The prayer that followed declared that God is above us, beneath us, around us and within us; loving us, calling us and lighting our way.

The St Stephen's Choral Scholars lifted our souls in an anthem of praise - "Jesu, joy of man's desiring, holy wisdom love most bright". Tracy then played another partita to support our silent prayers and meditations asking God to bring peace to our city and in the world.

A reading from 1Peter 5:2-3 focused on the responsibility of elders to tend the flock of God ... exercising oversight willingly ... and to be examples to the flock". In the sermon that followed, Ken spoke about Jesus choosing disciples and those to lead the church not from the elite, but from among ordinary people that He would guide.

We know that it was through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that the elders at St Stephen's were chosen for the gifts bestowed upon them by God to support the building up of our church.

After much prayerful consideration by individuals and by the congregation praying together, the elders who have been elected to the Discipleship and Church Councils are -

For the Discipleship Council:

Janice Dawson	Worship
James Williams	Discipleship
Judith Barton and Margaret de la Garde	Pastoral Care

For the Church Council:

Sheena Wiard	Property
Christine Morling	Administration
Martin Cherry	Staffing
Kathryn Lynch	Finance

Emeritus: Margaret Warden

During the commissioning, Andrew McCloud (The Sydney Presbytery Tertiary Ministry Organiser) read from the Uniting Church Regulation 3 which states: “the elders shall give priority in their council’s life to building up the Congregation in faith and love, sustaining members in hope, and leading the Congregation to a fuller participation in Christ’s mission in the world”.

The candidates for eldership then affirmed their vows; confessing anew that Jesus Christ is Lord believing they are called by God through the Church to His ministry, to live and work within the faith and unity of the holy catholic and apostolic church. They also promised to carry out their duties as elders by relying on God’s Grace.

After this, the congregation vowed to accept the elders before them, encouraging them in love and supporting them in the ministry of serving together the one Lord Jesus Christ.

A very special part of the service was the commissioning of Margaret Warden as “Elder Emeritus”. The following statement from the “Basis of Union” was used to describe Margaret’s ministry to the Church over many years – “The Uniting Church sees in pastoral care, exercised personally on behalf of the Church, as an expression of the fact that God always deals personally with people, would have God’s loving care known among people and would have individual members take upon themselves the form of a servant”.

The service concluded with prayers for the people and a hymn “In Thee is gladness amid all sadness, Jesus, daystar of my heart” sung by the St Stephen’s Choral Scholars.

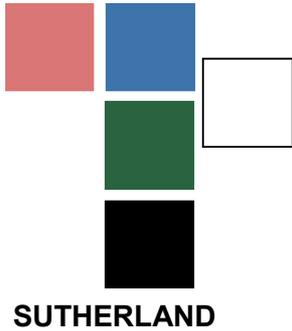
We, along with the other members of the St Stephen’s Church family, thank God for the faithfulness of those chosen to lead our Congregation and ask Him to bless and sustain them in the important work to which they have been called.



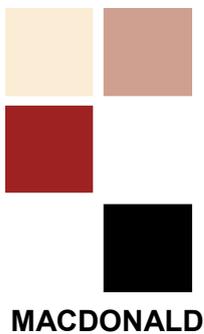
Graham and Caroline Penn

Kirkin' o' the Tartan

Sunday 29th November, 2020

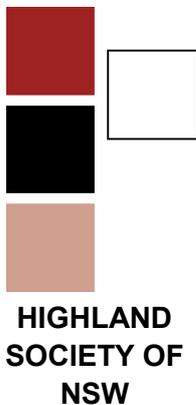


Did you know that the traditional Scottish Church service, the Kirkin' o' the Tartan, while it is a celebration of Scottish heritage, is really "All American" with a Scottish "twist"? The originator, or sometimes said to be the revivor, of the Kirkin' o' the Tartan is believed to be Rev. Peter Marshall who was minister of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington DC. Born at Coatbridge which is near Glasgow, Peter Marshall was a very proud Scot. At one of his services in April 1941, he is said to have preached a sermon entitled "the Kirkin' o' the Tartans"- and thus a legend was born. Today the celebration is not limited to Uniting / Presbyterian Churches but has spread to many parts of the Scots' world. The service is usually, but not always, held on the nearest Sunday to St. Andrew's Day, November 30.



And so it was with St. Stephen's Uniting Church in the City of Sydney who celebrated the Kirkin' o' the Tartan on Sunday 29th November 2020. With temperatures in the 40+ degree range and 1 degree with thick fog in Edinburgh, what a difference for the Aussie Scots compared to their compatriots who might be attending a similar service in the "home country".

Scottish names to the fore on the day were Campbell, Lindsay, Macdonald and Sutherland with those clans represented.



Many Scots and part Scots in the congregation would have been thinking of their forebears in prayer. The clans represented, bearing their banners, were led into the service by Piper Adam Wishart. Elder Judith Barton received the banners. In the "Kirkin' Prayer", Susan Cooke, High Commissioner for Clan Lindsay in Australia, prayed, "Almighty and eternal God, we praise and thank you for your goodness to us in our Scottish heritage. We dedicate to you our tartans – the symbols of the unwavering loyalty, steadfast hope and great achievements of our Scottish forebears". The vocal quartet sang "Lov'd Saint Andrew, Scotland's patron, true apostle, martyr bold/ Who, by deeds confirming, sealed with blood the truth he told".

Once again, Rev Ken Day has led a very special and meaningful Kirkin' o' the Tartan service.

We conclude with a story about a coincidence. On Sunday June 28th 2014 during Scottish Week, we attended a Kirkin' o' the Tartan service at The Hunter Baillie Presbyterian Church at Annandale. We still have the order of service from that day, which lists the guest piper as Adam Wishart.

Ron and Barbara Mallyon



Country Covid

Coronavirus has certainly done a number on everyone this year. For churches, where Christian support and caring going hand-in-hand on a communal basis, this has had significant ramifications. At St Stephen's, Ken has kept everyone going, firstly with YouTube services, Zoom meetings and then latterly with socially distanced, heavily sanitized, face-to-face services either in the church or *en plein air*. Some members have taken it upon themselves to keep up phone contact, especially with those who are not YouTube or Zoom savvy. The Tuesday service, presided over by Alan, has remained open all year thanks to Zoom, and held its first face-to-face meeting only two weeks ago on a Wednesday, supplemental to Tuesday.

But for churches without a minister, the closure due to Covid has had a more profound effect, where they have had to dig deep within themselves and seek other forms of worship.

Both Narromine and Jindabyne have only recently opened to socially distanced, outdoor services. But prior to that it was quite different. The town of Narromine had only one case of Covid and that due to a returning traveller; but the church was still bound by Synod rules. They have relied heavily upon services from Saltbush, posted on YouTube and in print, and Alan's Tuesday services sent as hard copy. Alan and I were unable to fulfil our yearly placement with the congregation this year. Safety first, but we did miss being out there. In order to keep spirits up the Church Council decided to divide up the congregational list among the Church Council members for them to make regular phone calls to their 'list'. I understand that this has been highly successful and much appreciated. They have recently re-commenced services in the outdoors. For those of you who know Narromine, this is in the carpark / Manse lawn area and they have had a few hot Sundays!! Food barn has only recently re-opened.

The A-frame Alpine Uniting Church (St Andrew's) is on a hill in town (higher than the Catholic Church – and yes there is a story attached to that!). Within the property is the famous Op Shop, known throughout Jinda-



byne and said by some to be the centre of the town.

Two years ago an extension was added, enabling the volunteer sorters to sort in a large airy room, under cover rather than outside, and this year a covered area has been built in the front. The Op Shop sells good quality second-hand clothes, books, bric-a-brac and most notably during winter, ski gear. There is a free pantry and free dinners on Monday and Wednesday and Saturday lunch during winter, with Wednesday and Saturday continuing in the summer months. All meals used to be in the hall, but Covid halted that. So, using a grant, the kitchen was re-configured a little to make it possible for people to collect pre-packaged meals at the kitchen window. The Op Shop covers all the cost of food, a part-time Manager and an SRE teacher.

Jindabyne also used Zoom for services. Again, they abided by Synod rules, but the town had had no cases at all, even during their, albeit smaller, winter season. We are there each year in October / November. This year it was "No don't come as we are still closed." And Alan could do the Zoom services just as easily from Sydney – and of course, there was no visiting. However, the Church Council

decided to try a different type of service outdoors and invited us to inaugurate it and go to Jindi as usual.

This year we lived in town which made it possible for us to walk everywhere, including to the church; great exercise as it is all up and downhill. There wouldn't a flat spot in Jindi over 200m in length!



The Church Council's new outdoor service, under the Op Shop outdoor covered area, commenced with socially distanced breakfast at 7.30am, followed by a call to worship at 8.00am, prayer, a parable (as a story, just as Jesus would have told), some canned or live one person music and then an adult discussion group and parallel activities for the kids. The first Sunday it was 3.5° (October 25!). So glad we had our Jindabyne winter gear with us!! The following week was a little warmer and so a few more brave souls turned up. By then too, we had refined things a little and the whole service went very well, many commenting on how they liked the informality and that it suited their children. I must admit it was an odd feeling initially doing an outdoor service competing against road noise, wildlife noises, kids running around, and juggling a sound system with a book and paper during the kids' story time. The church's intention was to continue this style of worship after we left and I think it will be very successful. Winter may prove a different story!

Alan and I did a lot of socially distanced visiting while in Jindi, catching up with church families who have become friends, meeting new parishioners, and making contact with some who may have drifted a little from church. We also had the great

pleasure of doing a service at Round Plain which is a half hour drive from Jindabyne, midway between Berridale and Eucumbene along the Rocky Plains Rd. It was the first church in the area, built in 1870, and the oldest church in the Snowy West Monaro. The cemetery is of historical significance and most graves are pioneering families of the area and their predecessors. It has no electricity or running water, but does boast a pump organ, which Don Hayman, Chair of the Jindabyne Church Council, can play and did for the service. Only a small number attended, but they covered all ages and were obviously close knit and loved the church. At the end of the service, thermoses, paper cups, tea bags were brought out and a covid-safe morning tea was had in the field. Such a lovely country touch.

We are all looking forward to getting back to 'normal', whatever that is, but our country cousins have found some clever ways of keeping their services going and their presence felt in town. God's presence is strong in these communities.

Lauris Harper



Janna



Organ and Trumpet Concert in her Honour

Janna Dijkers was a faithful member of St Stephen's for quite a number of years. She attended church regularly and was a keen participant in the life of our church. Janna particularly enjoyed organ music, so it was decided to organise a special concert as a tribute to her and as a way to celebrate her long life.

The Organ and Trumpet Concert took place on the afternoon of the 22nd November, the day when Janna would have turned 89. Nico Tjoelker opened the concert with two organ pieces which were beautifully played: J. S. Bach's *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor* followed by *Sicilienne* by Maria Theresia von Paradis. The audience were then treated to a wonderful rendition of the 2nd *Sonata for Trumpet and Organ* by Giovanni Viviani, with Mark Quarmbly playing the organ and Phill O'Neill on the trumpet. Mark and Phill united their remarkable talents later in the program to present *Sonata 1 in D for Trumpet and Organ* by Henry Purcell and *The Lost Chord* by Arthur Sullivan. Other highlights of the concert included a wonderful rendition of "Amazing Grace" (*Toccatà on Amazing Grace* by Chris Pardini) played by Mark Quarmbly – and *War March of Priests* by Felix Mendelssohn, which was beautifully played by Nico Tjoelker. Janna's friends as well as some members of the St Stephen's congregation who attended were thus able to celebrate Janna's life through listening to beautiful and uplifting music, featuring the organ and trumpet. The final piece – the '*Finale*' from *Symphony No. 1* by Louis Vierne, played by Nico Tjoelker - proved to be a fitting conclusion to an amazing hour of music which brought enjoyment to all who attended and left them with a feeling of serenity.

After Mark's playing of "Amazing Grace" on the organ, Janna's good friend of many years, Paul Breedveld, paid a wonderful tribute to her. In Paul's speech, he spoke of the long and eventful life which Janna had led, of her independence of spirit and of the amazing trips she had made, including those to exotic places in South America and Europe. Paul recounted so well

the path in life which Janna had travelled; that journey began in Eindhoven (Holland), but most of her eventful and full life was in fact spent in Sydney. Paul was a loyal and faithful friend to Janna, and she particularly appreciated their friendship during the latter years of her life, when she was in a nursing home.

Following the concert, all present were invited to refreshments in the Ferguson Hall. Members and guests were not able to move around freely and we all had to practise social distancing. However, despite the restrictions imposed upon us by Covid-19, it was clear that Janna's good friends as well as guests from the St Stephen's congregation really appreciated the chance to enjoy a cup of coffee or tea, something savoury or sweet to eat – and the opportunity to get together, to chat - and to remember Janna.

Janice Dawson



Dickers

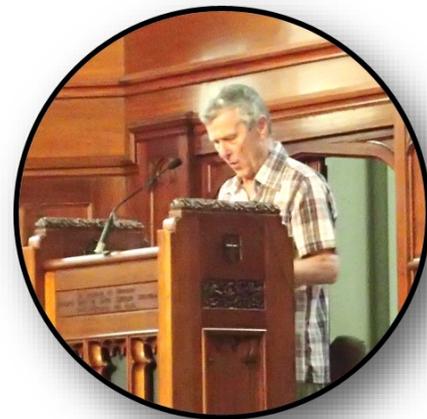
Vale

Janna Dickers was born on the 22nd November 1931 in Eindhoven, Holland, the youngest of three sisters. Sadly, Janna's father died before she was born, so she grew up in an all female household. Life was something of a struggle for the family and Janna's mother worked as a midwife to support them all. Unfortunately, their lives were made much more difficult by the Depression and then by the Second World War. The loss of Janna's middle sister at the age of 16 as a result of tuberculosis was a further blow. Janna certainly did not have an easy start to her life.

Janna finished her secondary schooling in 1948 and started work with Philips in an administrative position. After working there for seven years, Janna wanted to take a different direction and work in the field of social welfare. She took various courses to equip her with the knowledge and skills to work in this field, and became a trained home help. At this time, her older sister married and moved to Belgium, leaving Janna and her mother to share their lives, but fortunately there was a close bond between mother and daughter. Some years later, Janna's mother married again and Janna then moved to Friesland to work in social welfare. When Janna's stepfather died five years later, her mother wanted Janna to return to Eindhoven but Janna made the decision instead to emigrate to Australia in 1967.

In her early years in Sydney, Janna did a variety of low-paid jobs until she found a good position for herself at Sydney Hospital, where she worked firstly as a leading hand in the cleaning department. She was then promoted to the position of assistant to one of the Sisters there and was able to take out a mortgage to buy a unit in Kings Cross, which she subsequently paid off. In 1983, Janna obtained a position as housekeeper/supervisor at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in Camperdown, where she worked until her retirement.

Janna was keen to do some useful work for the community after her retirement, so she looked for voluntary work. She began working in the St Laurence Op Shop in Broadway, and that is where she met Paul Breedveld, who was to become a loyal and wonderful friend to her. Paul remembers Janna as a very dedicated volunteer, who was prepared to



do any task which needed to be done. Janna continued to work in this Op Shop until it closed down.

Unfortunately, Janna started to suffer from serious health and mobility problems later in life. It became much more difficult for her to enjoy the life she had always led, and eventually she became housebound and began to lose her independence. Janna had to move to the Sister Anne Court in Surry Hills and sadly, these last years of her life were certainly not her happiest. The loss of her independence was devastating for Janna, and having to continually use a wheelchair was not easy to bear.

Janna never married, but she had a large circle of friends. She was fiercely Dutch – and remained Dutch all her life. In the days following her arrival in Australia, she joined the Dutch church in Sydney but when this church had to close its doors, Janna joined the congregation here at St Stephen's. During her life, Janna also travelled widely, visiting exotic places like the Antarctica, the Ukraine and South America. Another love of Janna's was music. She had a subscription to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and would regularly attend concerts at a variety of venues, including the Town Hall, the Con and of course St Stephen's. She was also a very generous person who regularly donated to different charities, including St Vincent's, the Children's Hospital and Guide Dogs for the Blind.

All Janna's friends rejoice in the happy moments which marked Janna's life whilst acknowledging at the same time that her life was marked also by times of sadness, ill health and sorrow. It is good that Janna's suffering in her latter years is over and she is now at peace. We extend our sincere sympathy to Paul in particular, and to all of Janna's friends who mourn her loss.

Janice Dawson

(I am greatly indebted to Paul Breedveld for all the assistance he gave me in regard to the writing of this obituary)

In our own words . . .

Ron Mallyon and Barbara Reay were married on 18th March 1961 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Chatswood. The officiating Minister was Ron's father, the Rev John Mallyon, who at the time was the Minister at St Andrew's.

Ron and Barbara are products of that great matrimonial bureau, the church's youth organisation known as the Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia (PFA). We know we are not the only couple within the St. Stephen's family who met at the PFA.

We are blessed with two sons, David, who is married to Yuki from Japan, and Ian, who is partnered with Janet. We have three grandchildren. Our granddaughter, Dr Kylie Abbott, is married to Matthew and they have given us three great-grandsons - Liam aged 12, Jayden aged 10, and Arlen aged 5. Kylie has a PHD in dietetics and lectures at Newcastle University. Matthew has a degree in computer sciences and works in that field. Our grandson John is an Intensive Care Paramedic and has been with the NSW Ambulance service for the past nine years. He has a partner of almost six years, Avrill, who has a degree in Animal and Veterinary Bioscience and works in a research laboratory at Sydney University. Our third grandchild, Samantha, is married to Daniel Hall and they have also given us three great-grandsons, Archie aged 10, Fraser aged 6 and Remington who turns 3 next January. Samantha is a qualified hairdresser but these days is a full time "house Mum" looking after her three boys. They live at Beerwah in Queensland, and Daniel commutes between Brisbane and Melbourne to work as a Ship's Engineer with Toll Shipping on the Melbourne – Burnie run.

With two married granddaughters, the "Mallyon" name is missing so far. We have told John this is his responsibility. Only time will tell!

Barbara's Story

I was born in Brisbane on 4th June 1940, the only daughter of Eric and Edna Reay, and lived there for three years till the family moved to Sydney. Schooling was at Artarmon and at PLC Orange as a boarder, after which I studied to become a pre-school kindergarten teacher.

At age four, I had three brothers serving in WWII, Eric (Bill) in the Air Force, Jim in the Army and Gerald in the Navy. Unfortunately my older brother, Bill, did not return. He was killed on 29th March 1944 in an aircraft crash while on a training flight over Scotland. He is buried at Stonefall Cemetery in Harrogate, Yorkshire. Bill's epitaph reads: "He died that men may live to build a better world". He was aged 22. It was a very moving occasion when on 7th October 2018, family members attended one of the Australian War Memorial's Last Post Ceremonies which paid tribute to Flight Sergeant Eric (Bill) Reay.

It was a well-known fact that one's progress in the bank moved faster if you were prepared to do some country service. So our time in our first home at Chatswood only lasted four years. A week before Christmas in 1964, we were moved to Bingara NSW. With two little boys aged 3 years and 9 months, it was necessary to send Santa Claus an urgent message advising of our change of address. Not a problem! Santa found us without any trouble. After a little over a year in Bingara, we were transferred to Goulburn where our eldest son David started school and Ron became an Elder of the Presbyterian Church. In 1968 a transfer to Baulkham Hills Branch saw us settle in the Hills District. Ron's first managerial appointment came in 1976 with a transfer to Manilla NSW, followed by Walgett NSW. Then in 1981 we were offered Goroka in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. What an experience that was!

Ron's Story

I was born on 30th April 1937 and was the only child of John (1908-1990) and Thelma Mallyon (1905-1984). I feel very blessed because I was the only survivor of three siblings who died at birth. In 1939 my father was accepted as a candidate for the Presbyterian Ministry and he commenced studies at St. Andrew's Theological College. World War 11 intervened. Like some other students for the ministry, because they weren't ordained, he went away as a YMCA Welfare Officer, doing similar work to an Army Chaplain. My father completed his studies on his return from the Middle East, was ordained and inducted into the St. Andrew's Parish at Longreach in Queensland on November 12, 1947. At the age of 10, I became a "son of the Manse", and subsequently lived in Manses at Longreach, Scone NSW and Chatswood NSW until Barbara and I set up our own home at Chatswood in 1961. My father's final ministry prior to retirement was at the Scot's Kirk at Hamilton, Newcastle. There were many Christmas family gatherings when our two boys would hang up their Christmas stockings at the Hamilton Manse.

I joined the Bank of NSW (now Westpac) on 23rd August 1954. At the time I was living in Scone and I was placed at Tamworth. Later in the same year, Dad accepted a call to St. Andrew's Chatswood so I asked for a transfer to Sydney and a Manse again became my home.

In August 1956 I received my "call up" for National Service. After 3 months' initial training with the 13th National Service Battalion, I served with the 30th Battalion NSW Scottish Regiment until 30th June 1960. Strange as it may seem it is my association with the 30th Battalion that was the driving force which resulted in Barbara's and myself becoming members of the St. Stephen's congregation. After attending the NSW Scottish Regimental Association's Annual Church Parade at St. Stephen's on 19th November 2017, we both came away feeling so spiritually rewarded, we were convinced that St. Stephen's would be our new spiritual home.

In November 1990 Ron retired as Manager at Mount Druitt branch after 36 years of service.

Wherever we were (except of course in PNG) we attended church and were involved in the Lord's work, mainly in the Presbyterian Church. Being a banker, Ron was often elected to be Church Treasurer. He served as Treasurer at St. Columba's Presbyterian Church at Castle Hill for a total of sixteen years.

We remained Presbyterian at Church Union, being late comers to the Uniting Church early in 2002.

Ron and Barbara Mallyon



The back page



For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2: 11

You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. Luke 1: 14

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