

Word and Light

St John's Anglican Parish, Otumoetai



Food: growing, cooking eating

Spring 2021

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Themes for Word and Light

The theme for the next edition will be **Books & Films**. As ever, please use your imagination – there are many possibilities. We look forward to your contributions. Photos welcome!

Please send your contributions to Lynda, the Parish Administrator, by **15th November**. Remember that, to keep readers' attention, your articles should not be too long. If you have ideas for future themes, please let us know. *The Editor has the final say as to the suitability of articles for inclusion.*

Vicar's Voice

As ever, this edition of the Magazine has some fascinating articles thanks to our contributors. I hope you enjoy the variety.

Years ago, when John and I were both working, I used to do most of the shopping and cooking. We'd share other household tasks such as cleaning and ironing. We have lived in a number of different houses and when we have had a garden with space, I grew vegetables. Since John retired from paid employment, he has looked after our common life, so long as it does not involve technology which is my department!



John does most of the menu planning, shopping and cooking. I still grow vegetables when I can (see photo of the vegepod in the Vicarage garden). John turns any oversupply into soup for the freezer. He is a good cook and, as well as our meals, he makes bread and the occasional cake. Although we are

vegetarian, many of our meals are vegan and John has a wide repertoire of tasty dishes. Over the years, it has been wonderful for me not to have to worry about preparing meals as well as cope with the demands of being a parish priest.

Although I rarely have time, I do enjoy cooking and I usually join in the effort when we entertain. I also might make the occasional surprise such as the French Apple Flan I made for John's birthday during lockdown last year.



With every blessing

Sue (Vicar)

From ‘country member’ to ‘part of the furniture’

Tim Cross writes about faith, his work and ‘food for thought’

Firstly, thank you all so much for the love you have shown Lawrence, Fiona and me recently. The shock loss of my Mum, Maeve, in late May changed things unexpectedly for us.



We are very grateful for the support of our St John’s family as we work through change in our lives and continue to trust in God for His vision and purpose for us. Please keep us in your prayers – that God will continue to heal and help us daily.

The shift from being a ‘country member’ to ‘part of the furniture’ at 10am services has been great – I’m enjoying my time with you immensely. Also, I must share that the services that Vicar Sue prepares and both the Sues lead through COVID-19 lockdown are amazing! None of the other churches I have attended have offered anywhere near the same community care as our online services have. Treasure our leaders and all our times together. God’s Word and communion is food for our souls during these very challenging times.

Now some more about me. I was born and grew up in Tauranga and our family home in Milton Road has been home my whole life. Time at home again after years in Wellington is a rich blessing and regular reminiscence of so much.

I work for a company called WSP (formerly Opus) as Technical Principal | Team Leader – Business Intelligence, managing a core team of two young Business Intelligence Advisors. My job is a national role which aims to improve the way business communicates data and information and connects me to thousands of professionals in New Zealand and around the world. We use dashboards and other visual tools to help make sense of data; typically transport data. Examples of our work include the Highway Structures Management System (HSMS), which holds all of New Zealand’s road bridges and other significant structures. This involves close working partnerships with bridge engineers across New Zealand, the Data Knowledge Hub I co-lead with the Ministry of Transport, and the Moveable Lane Barrier

(MLB) on the Auckland Harbour Bridge which I will share more about below. Our core principle in everything we do, whatever the scale of problem or process: make complex things simple for everyone. Especially important when we are providing evidence directly to NZ Government decision makers and working with specialist engineering service teams, which happens very regularly.



Now back to MLB. As Auckland City grows it puts pressure on key infrastructure, none more so than the Auckland Harbour Bridge – the busiest stretch of road in New Zealand. Some of you may have seen the moveable concrete barrier on the bridge that helps manage varying demands on the bridge day by day; typically lots more people from the North Shore come into Auckland City in the morning, and then the same occurs in reverse in the afternoon. Our job has been to create a system for optimising when the MLB is moved.

As an engineer I could look at this process purely as a mechanical, transactional requirement and focus only on the job at hand. However, this, like all of our projects, is about the tangata: so many precious people, road users who need us to do a good job with our recommended timing and the people who move the barrier up to five times a day.

I was privileged to get a ride in the barrier machine in June with Martin Olive, the MLB supervisor. Since we started the project we have learnt the significance and importance of communications between us. As advisors, my team and I share when to move the barrier, but have also used the time to share more information: weather information and kind greetings and care for the crew at various times – building relationships and trust.



Before my visit we had only known Martin and his team on remote video calls. It was brilliant finally to meet Martin and team in person and learn that Martin and his family are Christians and that together our teams are providing amazing regular blessing to the people of Auckland. None of this would have been understood without the trust in communication we built over so long.

As an encouragement to us all – please take time to think about the people and gifts in our own lives where we can offer something less transactional and more caring and loving for people. Showing the love, peace and hope of Jesus as we journey together. Food for thought my friends!

Meet Debbie Allan, our new Playgroup Leader

Hi, my name is Debbie, and I am excited to be part of the St John's Anglican Church family as Playgroup Leader. A role that my three adventurous boys, Peter (11), David (10) and Jamie (8), have prepared me for with our community involvements. Our playgroup journey started around 10 years ago when we moved to Brookfield and went to the Ōtūmoetai Playgroup.



When we moved to rural Whakamarama 2 years later we joined our local community playgroup where I became Playgroup Leader. Having been involved with different playgroups I have grown to understand the importance of Playgroup's role in the community as a safe, welcoming place for families and where lifelong friendships are made.

In my short time with St John's Playgroup I have enjoyed meeting our Playgroup families and during our recent Covid-19 Level 4 lockdown last month, I was able to continue connecting with families with regular emails and through Facebook page sharing our music, craft, games and other activities.

Thank you to everyone for making me feel welcome and I look forward to being able to get to know you all.

Food for Thought

by David Ogilvy

It is 1956, deep in the Malayan jungle. It is day 30 of a three-month long jungle operation against the Communist Terrorist. It is airdrop day. Six SAS soldiers await the fourteen-day resupply of rations and equipment, the remaining members of the Troop are on patrol and will miss the drop.

A small area of jungle has been cleared; the Troop's identification panels have been laid out and a large orange balloon has been tethered to a fallen tree and flies above, silhouetted against the jungle canopy.

The drone of an approaching aircraft is heard, sounds like a Valetta, wireless communication is established, a Very signals pistol is fired – the Pilot confirms he has seen the green flare and the marker balloon. The aircraft makes a trial pass, completes its orbit, returns and drops the first container. It is an overshoot, it misses the clearing and will have to be found later, a second pass and this is an undershoot and again will require finding. The third and fourth drops are better and land in the clearing. The final drop is on target but 'candles' in when the chute doesn't open. Probably the box containing the demijohn of over proof rum!

Later the chutes and their contents are collected and sorted into individual piles by size: boots jungle, jackets jungle green, trousers jungle green, socks green woollen, drawers jungle green (note: most prefer to go Commando because of the heat) and hats jungle. The clothes barely last fourteen days; sweat, torrential rain, river crossing, mud and 'wait a while' vines play havoc with clothing.

And then there is the food: one day's fresh rations, a lump of steak to be cut into 16 pieces (bad luck for the fellows on patrol – their portions will be enjoyed by those in base), loaves of fresh bread (again to be shared by those in base) and thirteen days of tinned food – bully beef, Irish stew, casserole stew, mutton stew (if the labels didn't tell you, it would be hard to know the difference), packets of rice, hard tack biscuits, tea, an oatmeal block for breakfast and some small packets of raisins for a snack. Weight Watchers could learn a thing or two from this diet!

Spring Gardening

by Shelley Varnam

I am writing this during lockdown. It is lovely that spring is here after a very cold and wet winter in Tauranga. We can shake off the cold of winter and get moving out into the warmer weather. I'm sure the temperatures some days were the coldest I've experienced in the Bay since I moved here 7 years ago. However, I'm finding the new season's colours in the garden are lifting my spirits after the last few weeks of lockdown and uncertainty. My kōwhai tree is in full bloom alongside the wonderfully coral coloured vireya and my plum tree and blueberries are in full swing setting lovely new fruit.



Now is the perfect time to be planting veges for summer harvesting. Some very good early easy varieties to plant are snow peas, lettuce, radish, kale and broccoli. There is a wonderful broccoli named 'Summer Purple' which adds lovely colour to the vege garden. Of course, carrots, beetroot, perpetual spinach, celery, courgettes, strawberries and blueberries are all easy to grow and should be in the ground now.

As I prefer not to use chemicals in my gardens, I have found a great way of keeping slugs and snails at bay, is to scrunch up eggshells and scatter them around the base of new seedlings. The bugs hate crawling across the sharp edges of the shells, plus the shells add great nutrients to the soil as they break down – potassium, calcium carbonate and phosphorus. If you are not into making compost, a great way of still utilising your vege scraps is to 'trench'. I put my food scraps through the food processor to munch up, then dig the scraps in around the plants and gardens. They breakdown really quickly, building up the nutrients in the soil.

Obviously due to Covid lockdowns some seedlings have been very hard to come by. However, it's never too late to pot seed up, with a time lag of around 7 weeks from seed to seedlings ready for planting out. If you are unable to get to plant centres, a couple of local businesses who have been selling online during lockdown are Kings Seeds in Katikati, and Garden Post based in Te Puna. Egmont Seeds in Taranaki are also great. And once we are out of lockdown, there are often seedlings and plants for sale in the OASIS Op Shop (see photo).



Now the weather is warmer spending time in the garden is a lovely way to connect yourself with the external world, rejuvenate via the energy of the soil and plants, plus feel peaceful and energised at the same time. If you don't have a garden space to grow veges in, planters and pots that can sit in windowsill, sunny doorways or on porches are great receptacles for growing in. There is nothing better than spending time nurturing plants, then being able to produce a meal from your harvest. Gardening nourishes mind, body and soul – literally!

I've added in a lovely easy recipe I use often with new seasons veges...

Spring vege stir fry recipe (for 2-3 people)

- 2 tbsp butter
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp finely chopped fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 1 large carrot cut into small strips
- 1 small head broccoli
- 1 handful of asparagus or courgette
- 1 handful spinach or silverbeet
- ½ cup of peanuts

Red Salmon

by Janice Hough

Anyone who knows me won't be surprised to hear that I am a planner and I don't like to leave things to chance. I prefer to check and double check in the hope I haven't overlooked some important detail. I'm sure Alan will attest to the fact our camping holidays to Puriri Bay in the far north were organised with military precision, with me planning the food requirements in minute detail. My excuse – there are no shops for miles, other than for the supply of bread and milk. I spent days prior to travel preparing packets of food for our small deepfreeze leaving Alan to take care of the caravan (Men's Stuff)!

One highlight prior to travel, was to battle the hordes of Christmas shoppers at Countdown and stock up on canned food. We planned to be away for 14 days so, with my list in hand, I carefully collected and ticked off our requirements. Unbeknown to me, God had other ideas, which would soon become apparent. When I got to the aisle with the canned fish I thought no, this won't be necessary, there is always fresh fish available. Many of the campers had boats and any leftover catch was given to those without access to a boat. So canned fish wouldn't be necessary and would only add to the growing tow weight of the caravan. I certainly needed to keep that in mind. It's important to note, however, I do enjoy canned red salmon on squishy white bread and couldn't resist the 4 cans that were conveniently placed at eye level. Without a second thought these were added to the trolley. That wouldn't add too much weight, would it??

All packed, cross checked, double checked...we headed off with caravan in tow, on the 7-hour journey north to the DOC camp at Puriri Bay.

On arrival at our site, my heart sank when I spotted an oystercatcher with her young chicks. Sadly, one babe had a broken leg, was underweight compared to the others and survival didn't look promising. Those that know me, also know that I'm particularly tender-hearted when it comes to animals and birds. Alan is the same so he totally understood my feelings.



With God's help we were about to become caregivers to an Oystercatcher and its mother, not to mention the other birdlife that recognised they too could be onto a good thing!!

No points for guessing, this is where the red salmon came into its own and it wasn't on delicious squishy white bread! I discovered the chick enjoyed small pieces of salmon as well as the shellfish we cut from rocks and the left-over scraps from the other campers' fishing trips. The birds would often squawk outside the caravan door, being quick to learn, this was their 'Meals on Wheels'. Oystercatchers generally live on crustaceans, crabs and worms and we proved they are partial to red salmon as well. I suppose beggars can't be choosers!!

During our holiday we were blessed to share in the day-to-day activities and witness the recuperation of a seabird we would normally not encounter. I can't explain the joy I felt, when we first noticed the chick putting weight on its leg and how we had assisted in its recovery. I felt safe in the knowledge the bird would be OK when we left as it was starting to fend for itself. The whole experience was not how we had envisaged our holiday. However, those stunning seabirds added a dimension to our holiday we won't forget, enhanced by my purchase of Red Salmon that was never destined for our plates! We were in the right place at the right time.



Our Daily Bread

by Bob Shaw

'Give us today our daily bread' we prayed in church and school room, but it never seemed important to us until the year 1940, when German submarines began to sink the ships carrying wheat across the seas from Canada and Australia. The government of the time reacted swiftly, telling farmers that they must plough up pasture and sow

wheat. For my great-uncle Bern this was 'daft', he had never grown wheat and was not about to try. He protested strongly when the War Agricultural Committee sent a tractor and plough to his farm to turn over one of his thistle and gorse neglected fields, to plant wheat. He looked with scorn at the sparse take of wheat struggling to survive amid the weeds. When harvest time came, I went to help my cousin Brian stook the thistle dominated sheaves of wheat thrown out by the War Ag binder. These were stacked in the rick yard where the mice and rats had a feast. When the War Ag thresher arrived to remove the wheat from the straw and chaff, they threshed all morning before they filled a sack with grain. The worst fears of great-uncle Bern were confirmed.

Undaunted the War Ag people persisted, taking in more fields and producing improving crops. Great-uncle Bern still complained when the cheques for subsidy arrived from the Min. of Ag, and he continued to cast doubt on all this 'new-fangled' way of farming. As the war continued food rationing became even more restrictive, but it was only in 1945, when the war ended, that bread rationing was introduced for the first time. It appeared that the shipments of wheat from Australia and Canada were being diverted to feed the starving in war torn Europe.

When I started farming myself, ploughing up the grass fields on a run-down dairy farm in a neighbouring county, great-uncle Bern told my father I 'was bound to fail'. When in 1967 I proudly wore the tie of the 'Ten Ton Club', given to farmers who had recorded a yield of ten tons of wheat per hectare, he said that I was only poisoning the land with chemicals paid for by subsidies. He may well have been right, but the farmers of Britain had saved us from starvation at the height of the U-boat onslaught in 1941/44. In later years I used the stricture of the 'Law of diminishing marginal returns', taught in university, to reduce the input of agricultural chemicals and increase net profit per hectare, but great-uncle Bern was no longer alive to comment.



Remember the Tauranga Community Foodbank

by Diane Sorensen

Many among you are regular contributors to our weekly Foodbank collection at church. These donations are delivered on Monday morning to the Community Foodbank depot in Brook Street at Fraser Cove where they are gratefully



received. Your gift helps provide food and other necessities for needy families throughout the Tauranga area. It is a sad fact that the need for such assistance exceeds the supply and even with donations of food from local food suppliers and assistance from the business community the Foodbank struggles to provide as much help as it would like. There is never enough to go around.

If you are not yet a donor you might like to consider becoming one. Donating is easy. Simply add an item or two to your weekly shopping list, it doesn't cost a lot, for instance supermarket house brand baked beans can be bought for less than \$1 and you can get good bargains on 'special'! Simply bring your contribution along when you come to church and I will take care of the rest.

Your Foodbank donations will be gratefully received by people in need.

Ready for the Next Course?

By Angela Stensness

As I write, I am fast approaching a new chapter of my teaching career. I have been asked to share a little of my journey and have decided that since this edition of the magazine is all about food, that I would use this theme to discuss this 'next course'.

Some of you may be familiar with a degustation menu. Degustation menus are believed to have originated in France in the early 1900s as a way to showcase a chef's signature dishes. They are apparently the

mark of fine dining restaurants the world over. A degustation menu, in its simplest form, is a menu put together for tasting. It can sometimes comprise up to 20 courses where you will be given a selection of fine food to sample.

So here I choose to view my teaching career as a degustation menu, a selection of valuable experiences that have each had their own distinct flavour.

The first course probably began when I was about 6 years old. I would come home from school every day and dress up like my teacher and begin to teach my class that was made up of exemplary 'students' (my teddies and dolls). As I continued through my primary school years, I worked hard to develop my teaching practice, taking a roll, reading stories to my 'class' and creating multiple sets of activities with which my 'students' could engage. I guess this course really whet my appetite for the courses of the menu to come.

The next course of this menu came in the form of my university studies when I completed my Bachelor of Education (Primary) at Australia Catholic University in Brisbane, Australia. As I completed my studies the opportunity to gain the necessary theoretical and practical experience necessary was a course full of complexity and well thought out flavours. I remember particularly appreciating my lecturers who had just come straight out of the classroom, as they brought a strong sense of reality to all that they taught and shared. It was an extremely satisfying dish.

Unfortunately, upon leaving the second course full of hope, this next third course was my least favourite so far. My first teaching position, whilst seemingly full of promise on the menu, left me wondering whether I should have even begun this menu in the first place. Despite the sour taste it left in my mouth, I learnt that even a less than satisfactory dish can teach us valuable lessons. This course taught me about what a beginning teacher needs: a space to play, to explore and to learn, with guidance from an enabling yet patient mentor.

Luckily, I didn't leave the table completely, and after a little break from the menu, I returned to course number four. This course took me from Australia to the Far North of New Zealand. It was here that I

truly learned the craft of teaching. I was blessed to be welcomed and immersed in this small community and over my eight years at this rural primary school I learned what the vocation of teacher truly meant. I also realised that I learnt as much from my students as they did from me. This was a dish with surprising, yet rich flavours. As such, when the dish was taken by the waiter, I was left sitting at the table wishing that there had been more, and realising that this is always a good way to end a dish.

Moving to Tauranga to work at a Secondary School was somewhat of an unknown, perhaps akin to realising the next dish on the menu would be somewhat exotic, such as sampling crocodile. As a primary trained teacher, moving to the world of the secondary school was entering the brave unknown. However, I realised that just like many say that, in the end, crocodile just tastes like chicken, I discovered that students are students, whether 5 years old or 17 years old. Yes, there are some differences, but at the core students just want to be seen and heard and want the learning they engage with to have a purpose and they want a teacher who cares about them as an individual. This course was made even more tasty with the pouring on of the accompanying jus of the completion of my Master of Education part way through the dish.

Now after 11 years on this fifth course it is time to move on to the next part of the menu. This next course is exciting, as it feels as if all five previous courses are now somehow coming together to ensure that I am well prepared to make the most of this dish. I am so humbled now to have the opportunity to work at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute and to help new prospective teachers embark on their vocation as teachers, so that they too may enjoy the next course of their degustation menu. I can't tell you too much more about this course yet, as I am yet to enjoy the dish, but I can see the waiter on the way to my table and the dish does look and smell delicious. I look forward to sharing more with you about this sixth course and the courses to come as I continue to enjoy this ongoing degustation menu.



The simple spud

by Helen D'Ath

It's hard to imagine a kitchen in the Western World minus a potato or two! This **MUST** be the most popular vegetable today. Why is that? How did this happen? And how did the humble potato change the world?



This simple root vegetable has an illustrious history! The story of potato started around 350 million years ago, when it started to evolve from the poisonous ancestor of the deadly nightshade. Despite its origins in the Andes, it's an incredibly successful global food – it's grown practically everywhere in the world.

So how did the potato get to Europe? Some say it must have been with Columbus (1492), and indeed they were widely cultivated there by the mid-1500s. Apparently England resisted the potato for years, though Ireland cottoned on to it as they were poverty stricken and their soil suited the spud! And so it became their staple food.

For landless tenants in 17th and 18th century Ireland, a single acre of land cultivated with potatoes and one milk cow was nutritionally sufficient for feeding a large family. No other cereal could claim that feat. Thus, began the centuries-long captivation among Irish and British peasants with the potato. Some history theory claims that the population in Europe exploded after the spread of the potato. According to the researchers, introduction of the tuber accounted for close to one-quarter of the growth in Old World population and urbanisation between 1700 and 1900. And, it became widely accepted in the 1700s that eating potatoes increased people's height by at least half an inch!

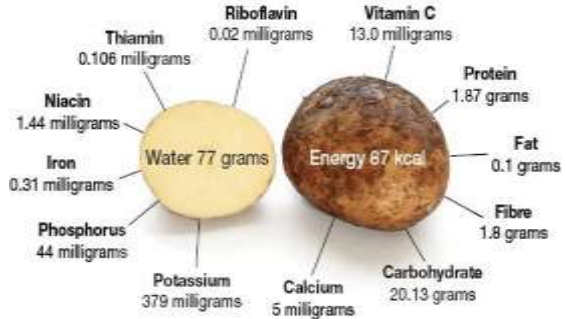
The potato frenzy continued until the Great Famine of 1845-1849 in Ireland. The failures of the crop led to the death of a million people, the emigration of one million people to the US and the steady departure of two more million elsewhere. Ireland's population was halved in a matter of decades. And that's when the potato became a

part of the American menu! Now it's the world's fourth most grown crop, after rice, wheat and maize, and the first among non-grains.

It's interesting isn't it, that as you grow older you value this wonderful plant more and more. Even boiled straight, or eaten chip by chip, various species have a recognisable taste, and need little more than a dash of salt and, if you like, a smear of butter.

So what are the health benefits of potatoes?

They do more than sustain life. They satisfy the taste buds and the hunger. Look at the diagram.



Potatoes are a good source of fibre, which can help you lose weight

by keeping you full longer. Fibre can help prevent heart disease by keeping cholesterol and blood sugar levels in check. Potatoes are also full of antioxidants that work to prevent diseases and vitamins that help your body function properly.

Phew! How about that! No wonder we revere the simple spud! Eat up and enjoy!

What has food got to do with the Bible or Christianity?

by Sue Genner

What has food got to do with the Bible or Christianity? A one-word answer would be 'everything'. We find food on the first and last pages of the Bible and in all sorts of wonderful places in between. In the creation story it is God who creates the vegetation. After he creates and blesses the humans he specifies which food is for them and which for the animals 'God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in

its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' It looks like we got the fruit and grains and the animals got the greens. Here we see God's abundance, God's blessing and provision for God's creation.

In Genesis 3 we have the story of 'the fall', depicted as eating forbidden fruit. Later in Genesis 18 is the story of Abraham offering hospitality to strangers. This famously inspired the icon painted by Rublev where the three angels are painted as the Trinity, with the bread and cup reminiscent of Eucharist and the calf being sacrificed heralding the sacrifice of Christ.



In the story of the exodus, food is highlighted twice – first with the Passover meal then with the provision of manna in the wilderness. A family meal becomes the symbol of God's concern for and rescuing of the oppressed and the manna shows God as the provider and nourisher of the people. Later in Israel's history a generous widow bravely shares her food with the prophet Elijah only to find God miraculously providing enough for them all.

Skip to the New Testament and Jesus spent so much time eating and drinking he was accused of being a drunkard and a glutton. Many of the stories of about Jesus occur around meals and hospitality and many of his parables used images of food. Jesus' first miracle in the Gospel of John happened at a wedding feast: the water was transformed not just into wine but some of the best wine you could imagine. Later he fed thousands with bread and fish. Jesus was criticised for what he ate, with whom he ate and how he behaved at the table. At the Last Supper Jesus shared with his disciples before his death, he shared bread and wine with them and imbued them with new meaning, which we still celebrate 2000 years later across the world as the Eucharist.

In the books of Acts and the epistles, food and drink continued to be important to some groups – sometimes it was issues around who one shared a meal with (Jews with Gentiles) and sometimes around the kind of food eaten (had it been offered to idols?). Sometimes the stories centred around making sure everyone had enough and people generously sharing with those who were in need. The Book of Revelation finishes with the city of God where there is a tree of life providing food and healing and everyone invited to drink the water of life – a banquet scene of sorts.

Many Christian missions and aid agencies today are involved in helping with the provision of food and, as we look around the world, there is significant inequality in access to food. The Eucharistic meal remains at the centre of our worship and fellowship over a ‘cuppa’ or a meal helps to grow our relationships with each other. The magic of a ‘pot-luck’ meal has to be experienced where there is always enough food and enough variety and a special atmosphere in time shared. We give thanks to God before eating as we acknowledge that all we have comes from our creator.

Stories about food and the provision of food permeate our scriptures, our theology and our mission. Thanks to God our provider for food eaten, meals shared and all the stories centred around the table. Amen.



Short stories about food

by Judith Davies

Last year I did a course on short-story writing through the NZ Writers College in Auckland. Here are a few stories I have written for this Magazine.

Food Glorious Food

Lionel Bart’s musical based on the 1838 novel by Charles Dickens. Young workhouse boys sing this as they are starving on a measly bowl of gruel a day.

Food Glorious Food
We're anxious to try it
Three banquets a day
Our favourite diet....

RIGHTEOUSNESS: Thoughts from Matthew 22: 1-14

There was a feast at the wedding
So many delicacies...what a feed
Dancing and music – they were ecstatic
Happiness in so many colours.

But a pause.

Security found the one not meant to be there.

A scuffle and a commotion

What could he have done?

It was whispered about....

He did the one thing you couldn't do.

He wore his own righteousness as a robe.

It was made of lists of his accomplishments,
his good works and charities.

Their robes were made of the Master's righteousness

His generosity and kindness. It was all about Him.

They couldn't earn it and qualify. They just had to believe and
exchange their clothes for His.

Excluded were people who wanted to do it, for themselves.

THE BODY and the BREAD: 1 Corinthians 12:13-31

Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. (Luke 14.15)

I am walking along feeling sad and depressed, when I see him, face
down on the kerbside. How embarrassing, I think I know him. I
recognise the jacket...that shade of red. Those shoes, he knelt beside
me the other day. We were at the communion rail. Now I am
exercising, taking a stroll before I go to bed. Should I ring III?

I walk up to him, and then I see him move and groan. That's right. His
name is Len. 'Len? Are you ok?' What a dumb question, I think. But
he's not dead. 'Help me, help me' he says. 'What's wrong? What's

happened?’ He rolls over and props himself on an elbow. ‘Do you really want to know?’

Should I ring the vicar? Goodness, I am in way over my head.

‘I am lonely. I am dying inside. My wife has died. I don't know what to do.’ ‘Oh Len.’ I hear myself say. ‘I am sorry. I nearly asked you the other day. Come and have a cup of coffee at my place... It's nothing much.’

‘Do you mean it?’ he asks. ‘Yes, Yes’ I say. ‘I didn't ask you because my rheumatism was playing up.’

He sits up. ‘You know,’ he says. ‘I thought you would say that I should pray. That I am never alone because God is with me.’ Was that what I am meant to say?

‘Listen Len, I am scared all the time. I don't know how to carry on. I might look good on the outside but I need help too.’ He struggles to stand up, and I put a hand out to help him.

‘We can help each other. What do you say?’ he asks.

‘Great,’ I say. We hobble off together to get a cup of coffee and tea. I remember I have a packet of biscuits. That will do. But when we get home, he asks for toast. Easy!

We chat away and I feel stronger. Rheumatism fades. When he goes, he smiles and I thank him.

‘What for?’ he says. ‘Being honest. Helping you is helping me.’

‘We need more fellowship in the body.’ he says. He is gone and I am left thinking. ‘He is right. That was what was wrong with me.’

Come to think of it, I'd better ring the vicar, to tell her he is in need. She says something strange. There is no Len at the church, and no one beside me at communion the other day.

‘You saw an angel’ she says. ‘He told you what to do.’ ‘What's that?’ I ask. ‘Ask each other to have a cup of coffee, of course. Share the bread. Strengthen each other.’

‘Oh’ I said.

HOPE: John 7:37

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. '

'How does that work in real life?' she asked the old lady.

'Well, I can't speak for everyone, but I can tell you how it worked for me. '

'Yes, 'she asked. 'Tell me. I want to know. '

'Herta, be patient. I am gathering my thoughts. '

There was a silence as Herta wriggled in her chair. Why was Mrs. Berth so slow?

'There was a time when I felt as if I had lost everything that mattered to me. My marriage, my children, my church, my friends and ministry, and my supposed job that I was training for, all got tossed overboard. I never stopped believing in my God, but I was lost and crazy with grief. God sent along a man who had also lost a lot in his life and gave him words that built up my destroyed soul. God gave him words that were living water. He said he didn't know where they came from. That the wisdom was not his. He in fact, felt irritated and impatient with me, most of the time. Those words made me well. '

'Wow. That's amazing, 'she said. 'Somehow, I thought it would be more miraculous, like gifts of healing etc. '

'I think that can happen. But not always. '

'Did you get the living water for him? Did you return the favour? '

'Not in the way he wanted. '

'What do you mean? '

'He became very sick, and wanted to be healed, but God didn't give me that sort of living water. '

'What did he give you? '

‘The ability to have compassion and face his death. The ability to pray for his soul when he doubted and forgot all he taught me. The ability to stay at his side and look after him when I had no strength. I had to withstand the forces of hell that wanted to take him. ‘

Herta looked pale. She said, ‘That sounds so hard. ‘

‘I believe he was taken by the Saviour right at the end. ‘

‘Those words of Jesus sound so beautiful, and they are. But the living water can be different to what we think?’ asked Herta.

‘Now you understand, ‘ said Mrs. Berth. ‘God is in charge. Not us. ‘

Cookbook Memories

by Frances Ferrabee

Why did I give my Moosewood cookbook away? Day 3 of Level 4 lockdown, being under house arrest, or so it seemed, I decided to make bread. Edmonds Cookbook has yet to prove itself regarding bread recipes (I don't have a bread maker) and I checked out ‘tried and tested – simply the best’ recipes in our AAW recipe books.



Looking through for a bread recipe, I found many names, making me smile. And a variety of recipes contributed by past and present St John's parishioners. Several names I didn't know, and names of our dearly departed members brought fond memories. I didn't find a bread recipe but I had much pleasure discovering parishioners, friends and parish family past and present. I made some bread using the Edmonds Cookbook recipe – it was okay, but the Moosewood Lodge Cookbook is one I recommend.

The inspiration of the Magnificat

by Bob Shaw

'He hath filled the hungry with good things' sang the Blessed Virgin Mary. Words which I repeated as a choirboy singing the 'Magnificat' at evening prayer. Words that I remembered



when I was called to assist in the rehabilitation of the farming sector in Ethiopia following the disastrous drought-induced famine of the early 1980's. Worldwide aid agencies had been pouring food in to feed the people, but the peasant farmers needed to return to self-sufficiency to recover their self-respect, return to their way of life and support their families.

With funds provided by Caritas I set about purchasing seeds from areas less affected by the drought, transporting them to the drought affected parts, and distributing them through the local organisations. We also found draught oxen, plough parts and other agricultural tools.

By 1990 the peasant farmers were back working their land and growing substantial crops, but the aid agencies still had to distribute imported food to feed the surviving population. In cooperation with the Dutch organization Cebemo I embarked upon a study to find out how many people could be fed from the land available, without imported fertilisers, or crop protection products but using all the latest biological friendly techniques. The results of this study showed that a population of eighty million could be sustained. However government census statistics showed that the population was nearing one hundred million. Clearly there could be no end to the need for food aid and so it has continued until the present day.

There is famine in Tigray province at the present time not due to drought but because relief food supplies are disrupted by civil conflict. In the course of our study we also observed that the birth rate in the areas affected by famine actually rose over this period, indicating that that the human population reacted to the thousands of deaths, by

increasing reproductive activity. It is clear that the human race must take responsibility for the world in which we exist. The Almighty God cannot be expected to provide ‘the hungry with good things’.

Why I changed my diet

by Sue Genner

I grew up on a dairy farm. In addition to the cows we always had a few pigs, some chickens and ducks. We also had a big vegetable garden and a small orchard at one end of our section. Typical dinners were meat, potato and two veg. Breakfast was sometimes 2 courses with porridge followed by eggs and sometimes bacon. We sometimes even made our own butter from the cream. It all seemed normal. When I was a teenager I read Frances Moore Lappé’s book ‘Diet for a small planet’. The efficiency of using plants to solve world hunger struck me then – plants are a more efficient way of using the land to provide calories and protein. While I didn’t rush off and become vegetarian it certainly tugged at my sympathies. Both my sisters were interested in vegetarian food as they grew up and so vegetarian meals were something we started to eat more of from the time I was in my teens.

Fast forward a few decades to 2013... one of my colleagues was talking about this book he’d read and the changes he and his wife were making and it piqued my interest. So I read ‘Prevent and reverse heart disease’ by Caldwell Esselstyn. By the end of the book I felt like I’d been hit over the head with a sledge hammer! The data for the health benefits of eating a plant-based diet was overwhelming. At 54 I was morbidly obese with high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol. I had tried diets over the years but nothing lasted – weight was gained and lost in a yo-yo fashion but often regaining more than I had lost. I had given up.

So almost overnight I went from omnivore to vegan – eating whole plant food, avoiding the processed stuff, no added oils. No flesh, no dairy, no eggs. I started with recipes that were in the book I had just read. I noticed immediately how much better I started to feel. I never wanted to go back so I began to consume information voraciously, reading books and websites, watching films, listening to podcasts.

Initially I identified as ‘plant-based’ not vegan. But a funny thing happened – when I stopped eating animals I started to hear some of the other messaging and gradually I realised that I did not want to contribute to animal deaths and cruelty so I began to identify as vegan. I heard about the environmental cost of animal agriculture and so my motivation became 3-fold: for my health, for the animals and for the environment. I lost weight and normalised my blood pressure.

I started to talk to patients about lifestyle and saw some of them improve their health also. This way of eating is better for diabetes, bowel problems and migraines, it decreases the risk of most of our chronic western diseases: heart attacks, strokes and many cancers. I even found my chronic hayfever resolved and I stopped the medication I had been using for decades. My interest in cooking was reignited and I found all sorts of delicious healthy recipes to try.

Many of us eat the foods we eat because that is all we have known. For some of us choices can be influenced by other factors: allergies and other health issues and there may be ethical issues such as the environment or animal welfare that drive our decisions. Perhaps one of the best things we can all do is become more mindful and conscious of our eating and food choices.

What do I eat? A typical winter day might begin with porridge (made from steel-cut oats). I top it with blueberries and banana and accompany it with a soy flat white.



For lunch, soup and toast spread with hummus is a current favourite. Dinner might be brown rice with a vege stir fry, curry or chilli topping or a delicious comforting vege stew. For Mum's birthday dinner I made Felfel Shakshuka (tender felfel simmered in a smoky, rich, spicy sauce made with tomatoes and eggplant) accompanied by mashed potatoes and broccoli. We followed this with a delicious (vegan) chocolate cake and some vegan icecream. I rejoice in the abundance of all God gave us which grows on this earth. As we sometimes sing before meals ‘Thank you God for giving us food. Amen!!’

Time to Remember (COVID alert Level permitting)

On **Sunday 31st October at 7.00pm** there will be an *All Souls' Service for the Commemoration of the Departed*. This is an opportunity to give thanks for the lives of those dear to us who have died. It is appropriate for people who have lost a loved one recently or many years ago. The names of those to be remembered will be read out during the service and those who attend may light a candle in memory of loved ones. Please feel free to tell other members of your family, your friends and neighbours about the service and invite them to come too.



A Service of Reflection for Advent

At 5pm on Sunday 5 December, the second Sunday of Advent, there will be a service of reflection and meditation for Advent using images, music and prayer featuring the O Antiphons each of which highlight a title for the Messiah. *This will take place in church unless COVID alert levels prevent us in which case it will be held via Zoom.*

The Art of Advent

Our **Advent Conversations** will focus on the art of Advent through:

- visual images such as paintings: depictions of familiar stories interpreted by others;
- poetry: an art form in which human language is used for its aesthetic qualities and which expresses feelings and ideas;
- music: the 'art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds in a harmonious or expressive way'.

We will use these to explore the connection between God and humanity, beauty and holiness. More details nearer the time.

Wednesdays: 8th and 15th December 11.00 am or 7.00 pm.

If we are prevented by COVID alert levels from holding these sessions in church we will offer at least one session each Wednesday via Zoom.

About this Magazine

This Magazine is called *Word and Light* because our parish church is dedicated to St John the Evangelist. At the beginning of the Gospel of John there are many powerful images. Two of these are *Word* and *Light* and they are woven together. Jesus as the *Word* of God echoes the story of creation. Jesus, the *Light* of the World, is the one who shines in the darkness.

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