

Word and Light

St John's Anglican Parish, Ōtūmoetai



Saints and Christmas
November/December 2022

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Theme for Word and Light

The theme for the next edition will be **Trial and Error: successes and fiascos with endeavours**. Articles on other topics you think may be of interest are also welcome. As ever, please use your imagination – there are many possibilities. We look forward to your contributions. Photos will be very welcome!

Please send your contributions to Lynda, the Parish Administrator, by **13th February 2023**. Remember that, to keep readers' attention, your articles should not be too long (*up to 700 words*). 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

Another year is drawing to a close. During much of this year we have continued to cope with restrictions related to Covid. Thankfully life is easier now. However, we are aware of the ever-present threat of the virus, the complications it has caused for many who contracted it and of other challenges facing many people here and in other countries.

Whatever 2023 holds, we can be sure that God travels with us through thick and thin – Emmanuel means ‘God with us’. Shortly we enter the first season of the new church year with Advent Sunday on 27th November and in just over a month we will celebrate Christmas.

The word Advent means ‘coming’ or ‘arriving’. There is something special about this first season of the church year. Advent doesn’t ask us to repent in the way Lent does. It doesn’t inspire us to rejoice as Easter does. It doesn’t educate us in Jesus’ ministry and work as Ordinary Time does. Advent nudges us to make space in our lives for Jesus and to ponder God’s extraordinary, unconditional love.

During Advent we give voice to the ache and pain and longing in our hearts. Advent is also when we confess our own participation in the brokenness of the world. We pray for Christ’s coming to heal the world. We pray for the grace that Christ may heal the brokenness in our lives so we may participate in bringing wholeness to others.

Advent assures us that the Son of God is coming and invites us to be on a journey of hope and joy and love. Full of anticipation and promise, we watch and prepare and follow a star towards Christmas.

This year we are able to hold our Advent and Christmas services without restriction – what a joy! Details of our services can be found towards the end of this Magazine.

And, finally, I bid readers farewell with this editorial. My thanks go to all who have made this a great publication over the last three years. Keep it up – I know many people enjoy writing and reading the articles.

With every blessing

Sue (Vicar)

Christmas in Makale, Tigray, Ethiopia

by Bob Shaw

Although I longed to be at home in Switzerland with my family, urgent considerations with my work kept me in Makale, the hot dusty capital of Tigray province. On Christmas Eve brother Ceasare Bullo and I had both gone to sleep in front of a TV set playing a video he had selected. This was not unexpected and the younger brothers watching used to bet on which of us would fall asleep first.

Next morning, I set off for the mass in the company of a tall, blond, curly haired, Italian priest Abba Angelo, who came from a village in the Italian Tirol. We talked on the way about the problems created by priestly celibacy, because we were going to have Christmas lunch with the nuns from the neighbouring cloister. The church where we took mass together had been constructed entirely of stone by a single Ethiopian Catholic priest with his bare hands over many years.

Returning to the brothers' residence we found a crowd in nun's habits mixing freely with the neatly dressed brothers, for a celebration of matins. I was honoured by a request to read in English a passage from St Luke's Gospel. After the brief service we sat down for lunch and I found myself seated by the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, whose downcast eyes expressed the fear that most women in Africa have in close contact with a member of the male sex. For many African women entry into the cloister represents protection from the all-powerful domination of the male.

At the conclusion of the repast that had been cooked by the nuns themselves, an elderly nun rose to make an address. She was a lady of some presence who hailed from an aristocratic British family and who had chosen to end her days in the province where she had worked for many years. She spoke at first in Tigrayan, then in Italian, and lastly in English. It was a message of hope for the future of the famine and war-stricken province in which they all lived. A rosy future I am sad to say that has not eventuated.

Tarore

Most of us will have heard the story of Tarore, but did you know a song had been written about her? We commemorate her on 19th October in our church calendar. This hymn was written by Bill Bennett one of our prolific Waiapu hymn writers.

*Tarore, Tarore,
The child whose light still shines;
Tarore, Tarore,
shine in this heart of mine.*

You adored the Gospel story,
telling of Christ's light and love.
You who saw in him God's glory,
peace on earth and peace above.

You whose life was sadly shortened
in the heat of utu's power;
yet from sadness came redemption,
as Christ's love began to flower.

From the scriptures that were stolen,
telling of the Saviour's life;
Ripahau then read the story,
bringing hope when all was strife.

Tarmihana of Otaki,
son of feared Te Rauparaha,
carried on Christ's saving message
to the people near and far.

We who love the Jesus story,
have a hope we need to share;
for her life is etched in glory,
hers a faith we now declare.

*Tarore, Tarore,
The child whose light still shines;
Tarore, Tarore,
shine in this heart of mine.*

St Ninian

By John Beverly

The very south-west of Scotland is quite close to Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man and this helps explain why it is very important in the early history of the Celtic church. The small town of Whithorn – a Royal Burgh – and the neighbouring town of Isle of Whithorn are associated with the 4th / 5th century St Ninian.



In the middle of Whithorn are the ruins of the White House – Candida Casa – the church said to have been established by St Ninian in the mid 5th century AD. The name derives from Latin: *casa* (meaning hut) and *candidus/candida* (meaning shining or glittering white), referring possibly to the stone used to construct it or the whitewash used to paint it. The photo above shows the ruins of the Priory which was founded about the middle of the 12th century by Fergus, the Lord of Galloway. At the Isle of Whithorn there is a 12th century chapel.



Further down the coast is a cave where St Ninian is said to have sheltered and prayed. These photos show the setting of the cave – you can just see the entrance to the cave, towards the left. The other photo is one Sue took while looking out from the cave entrance along the beach.

But who was St Ninian? And did he really exist?

Described as the Apostle to the Scots, whilst there are a number of dedications to him in areas of Pictish heritage and also in northern England, nothing definitive is known about his life or teachings. It has been



suggested that the name of Ninian can be identified with the historical figures of St. Finnian and St. Finbarr. He is described in some sources as a Bishop and also as a fore-runner of St. Cuthbert, who undoubtedly did much to spread the Gospel in Scotland and the north of England.

Sue and I spent a week in Whithorn in October 2016 and visited the White House and the cave. The area is redolent with history and, attracted as we are to Celtic spirituality, we could imagine the life of the saint so many years ago. This area of Scotland can be called a 'thin place' where there is little divide between earth and heaven. The area is somewhat off the beaten track now, although a little to the north is Wigtown which is self-described as Scotland's book town!



Local Saints

by Sue Genner

The Roman Catholic Church had, and has, a process for canonising saints. Following the establishment of the Anglican Church we brought into our calendars those who had already been canonised. We have continued to add to our calendars those who have been martyred, those who we regard as particularly holy or heroic in some way although we don't usually preface their name with 'Saint ...'. Each province has its own calendar of Saints including those who are local as well as those from the Bible and early church history. There are several saints here in Aotearoa/New Zealand who come from Waiaapu.

Hēni Te Kiri Karamu¹ was born in 1840 and we celebrate her life on 29th April. She is best remembered as the compassionate heroine bringing water to the enemy (British officers) during the battle of Gate Pā in 1864. They had been reminded of the text 'if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink' so when Hēni heard a wounded man calling for water in the evening in her words 'his calls aroused my compassion' and she crawled across the battlefield

¹ For All the Saints on <https://www.anglican.org.nz>

bringing water to him and several other soldiers. Hēni had spent some time at Henry Williams' mission station at Paihia. She was an assistant teacher and fluent in Māori, French and English. Hēni was a translator for Wiremu Tāmihana in the Waikato before moving to Tauranga. She later attended a theological school, became a licensed interpreter in Rotorua and worked for the Women's Christian Temperance Union. She lived to the age of 92.

We celebrate the life of **Frederick Augustus Bennett** on 23rd May. He was born on 15 November 1871 at Ōhinemutu, Lake Rotorua. His mother, Raiha Ratete (Eliza Rogers), a high-born woman of Ngāti Whakaue section of Te Arawa, gave to her son the culture and whakapapa of her race. His father was Thomas Jackson Bennett, a storekeeper, who had emigrated to New Zealand from Ireland in 1849. He had a splendid command of the English language and was a keen church worker. Frederick's dual ancestry equipped him powerfully for his life's work.²

³On December 2 1928 in Waiapu Cathedral he became the first Māori bishop when he was appointed suffragan Bishop of Waiapu. He was renowned for his skills in oratory in both Māori and English. It was said he could speak for the Māori to the Pākehā and for the Pākehā to the Māori. A rangatira of the old school, he personified a simple dignity. He died in September 1950. Archbishop Norman Lesser (who laid the foundation for our church here in Ōtūmoetai) chose the inscription for his grave 'Here lies all that could die of Frederick Augustus Bennett'. The following is a translated excerpt of a eulogy given by Kepa Ehau:

‘Our revered elder in Christ
You were like the strong tōtara,
the lofty tōtara from the great sacred forest of Tāne Mahuta
that which bought unity, strength and stability to our canoes ...
Servant of God,
go, sail on your canoe of faith.

² <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3b29/bennett-frederick-augustus>

³ *For All the Saints* <https://www.anglican.org.nz>

And when you reach the highest of the heavens.
the resting place of the Lord,
there a voice will be welcoming you:
Come, the faithful people of my Lord
and dwell in the kingdom of heaven,
a place has been prepared for you
since the beginning of the world.'

The information about these two saints comes from a book called *It is good to celebrate the lives of saints and heroes of our faith and we give thanks to God for the inspiration they are for us*. But remember, in scripture, all believers are referred to as saints and that includes you and me. I wonder what would be written about us if 'For all the Saints' was edited and expanded to write about each of our lives?

Whitby Abbey and St Hild

by Sue Beverly

Some years ago John and I spent a few days walking on the moors and along the coast of north Yorkshire, England. We stayed on the outskirts of Whitby. If you have ever been to Whitby, you will know that the skyline for some miles around is dominated by the ruins of Whitby Abbey. Whitby Abbey has a



fascinating history and much of particular significance in church history happened there. There is also an ancient musical connection.

Whitby Abbey was founded in 657 AD and a remarkable woman called Hilda (St Hild) was the first Abbess.

Saint Hilda, Abbess

Hilda was a member of one of the royal families of Northumbria. She was born in 614, just before her father was poisoned in a court intrigue. Hilda and her sister and mother went to live with her father's uncle, King Edwin of Northumbria, and she grew up in the royal court.

King Edwin's wife was a Christian and had a chaplain, Bishop Paulinus, who had come to Britain with St. Augustine. When Hilda was 13, King Edwin was baptised by Bishop Paulinus. Hilda was also baptised, along with the rest of her family.

When Hilda was 33, she decided to become a nun and made preparations to join her older sister in a convent in France. But St Aidan, the Bishop of Northumbria, did not want to lose her to France and asked her to stay in Britain and lead a small convent in his area. Hilda learned about the Celtic traditions from St. Aidan, particularly the importance of humility and simplicity in religious life and the Celtic vision of God revealed through nature.

The Celtic church encouraged female leadership and soon Aidan asked Hilda to become abbess of a large double monastery, for both monks and nuns, called Hartlepool. Hilda quickly gained a reputation for intelligent and wise leadership. Together with her membership of the royal family, she was an important leader in the Celtic church of Northumbria which illustrates the egalitarianism of Celtic Christianity.

Her good reputation led to a dramatic turn in her life. Her relative King Oswiu, after winning an important battle, gave a large tract of land to Hilda on which to create a new monastery. There Hilda established a new double monastery which became known as Whitby. So Hilda is known as St Hild of Whitby.

Hilda built up her new monastery into a centre of learning by acquiring a large number of books. In those days, long before the printing press, all books were copied by hand by monks and nuns. So they were very expensive and valuable. Hilda built up a large library which attracted many people who wanted to become monks, nuns and priests. Children were also educated there, learning to read Latin and absorbing the knowledge accumulated in the many books of the monastery library.



In addition to educating people, Hilda maintained strict monastic standards at Whitby. All goods and property were held in common, all residents of the monastery studied the Scriptures and prayed together, and peace and charity for all was the standard. Hilda gained such a reputation that kings and bishops travelled to Whitby to consult with her. The Venerable Bede, the historian of the early English church notes of Hilda that 'all who knew her called her mother because of her outstanding devotion and grace'. Her monastery was so successful that eventually five of her monks were ordained bishop.

Hilda bridged the Roman and Celtic traditions in England. She was baptised by Bishop Paulinus from the Roman tradition and was an abbess under St. Aidan in the Celtic tradition. These two ways of being Christian clashed at an important church meeting, the Synod of Whitby in 664. Hilda played a significant part in this meeting. Celtic and Roman teachings differed on certain significant points: the calculation of the date of Easter was the largest stumbling block. The Synod of Whitby marked a turning point in the teachings of Christianity in Britain as religious leaders decided to follow Roman, not Celtic, teachings.

In 867, the abbey fell to Viking attack, and was abandoned until 1078, when it was re-founded by Regenfrith a soldier monk, under the orders of his protector, the Norman, William de Percy. The second monastery lasted until it was destroyed by Henry VIII in 1540. The abbey buildings fell into ruins, and were mined for stone, but remained a prominent landmark for sailors.



Caedmon – a musical connection

Tradition tells us that Hilda also was instrumental in nurturing the first English poet. One day Hilda heard a shepherd – Caedmon – singing verses he had composed in Anglo Saxon the local language which eventually became English. Hilda was impressed by his ability to compose poetry and she invited him to take up residence in her

monastery. That meant he could leave his occupation of herding and spend more time composing verse and song.

Accounts by the historian, the Venerable Bede (673-735), seem to confirm Caedmon was an elderly cattle herder at Whitby Abbey who was suddenly inspired to verse, seemingly by divine influence. Modern scholars agree that Bede is probably recording a genuine tradition. A striking modern cross in St Mary's churchyard in Whitby, at the top of the 199 steps which lead down the hill to the town, commemorates Caedmon.

Caedmon is often referred to as the father of English sacred song. He took the religious ideas of the Bible and Christian tradition and set them to music in verse – that is, he composed hymns in English. They helped Hilda and her monks and nuns teach the local population about Christianity in an attractive and easy way.

Here is one version, in modern English, of what is known as Caedmon's Hymn:

Now we should praise the Guardian of heaven's kingdom,
the Creator's might, and His subtle thought,
the work of the Glorious Father; how He [all] wonders was,
eternal Lord, originally establishing.
He first shaped, for Earth's children,
heaven as roof, Holy Creator.
Then middle-Earth: mankind's Keeper,
eternal Lord, afterwards made
for men: our Earth. Master almighty!

Besides Bede's Latin original there are also versions of the verse in West Saxon and in Northumbrian, which is probably the closest to the original. Some manuscripts also preserve the musical rhythms in triple time in which the hymn was sung though the melody is lost.

Just as Caedmon's inspiration is otherworldly so his origins are a mystery and his rise from being a cattle herder to poet is the first English tale of a literary star rising from obscure origins.

St Cecilia

by Beryl Dent

One of the hymns we sing is 'Thy Kingdom Come O God'. The tune was written by L.G. Hayne (183 –83) and he named the tune St Cecilia. The saint features in a lot of classical and church music as she became the patron saint of music. One of my favourites is *Messe Solennelle en L'Honneur de Sainte Cecile* by Charles Gounod. It was composed in 1855 and first performed on 22nd November of the same year. It is slightly extended from a normal mass and for this reason some criticise it as not liturgically strict.



This is part of a poem by W. H. Auden and set to music by Benjamin Britten:

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions to all musicians, appear and inspire,
translated daughter, come and startle composing mortals with immortal fire.*

Who was St. Cecilia?

There are many conflicting of about St Cecilia, especially her date of birth and death, but it is most commonly stated that her life was during the third century as paintings of her often depict her playing the forerunner of an organ. This probably is fact rather than legend. It is popularly believed that she was of noble birth in Rome and took a vow of virginity. Despite this her parents forced her to marry a pagan nobleman, Valerian. During her wedding she sat apart, singing to God in her heart and that is why she was later declared the saint of musicians.

When it was time for the marriage to be consummated, she told her husband that there was an angel who would punish him if he sexually violated her. He asked to see this angel. She told him go to Pope Urban and be baptised. He did this and saw an angel standing next to Cecilia. His brother Tibertius also went to be baptised when Valerian told him about the angel. The brothers dedicated their lives to burying the 'saints' who were murdered by Turcius Almachius, the prefect of the city. In her lifetime Cecilia was able to convert over four hundred people to Christianity.

The brothers were executed when they refused to offer a sacrifice to the Roman gods. Cecilia was later condemned to death by suffocation in the baths, but she did not die and Almachius sent an executioner to behead her. After the three required slashes to her neck she was still alive. She died on the third day. Before she died, she asked for a church to be built over her old home, where she was buried.

In 1599 a new church was built and her body was exhumed. The body was well preserved and it was discovered she was still a virgin making her the first virgin saint.



The Gift

by Merina Foster

On the 25th December we have a celebration across all nations, throughout the world. We celebrate with gifts, holidays, family, friends and delicious food. We celebrate in the whitest snow or uncomfortable heat. Whether we are surrounded by a roaring fire or finding respite in the shade of a majestic tree, the world is united in the festive season. But what is it that we are celebrating? The coming of the year end? A well-deserved break from the 9 to 5? Or the family we haven't seen since the last Christmas gathering?

What is celebrating Christmas all about anyway? The real reason Christmas is marked on the world's calendar is to celebrate the birthday of a baby. A baby who was born into this world to change it, to make a difference and to ultimately save all of humankind. God chose Jesus to walk on earth so we could see God's own character revealed through him – an amazing gift to us that can't be topped.



We celebrate Jesus' birthday on the 25th December, but no one is exactly sure when he was born. Gifts were given to Jesus when he arrived. Frankincense, Gold and Myrrh were the chosen gifts that were presented to the King. Therefore, it leads me to ponder – what can I give Jesus this Christmas? Or better still, each and every day of my life. Should I go all over the world and collect the most expensive, precious items, wrap them up in an elaborate parcel and present them to Jesus on his birthday? Or maybe just a voucher would be ok?

No, I don't think so. I believe the most priceless gift we could present to Jesus on his birthday is us. Our hearts, our minds, our willingness to serve him and others. Wrapped up in plain paper with the words 'I am yours' written on it. I personally know from my own journey that Jesus doesn't ask for perfection or the most elaborate, he asks for realness and a heart willing to serve.



Imagine a Christmas morning scene. Presents stacked under the Christmas tree. Stockings hung, twinkling lights, soft cheesy Christmas music playing in the background. Grandma, Grandad, Aunty, Uncle, Mum, Dad, Brother, Sister, dog, cat, and in the centre, Jesus. Laughter, celebration, the smell of Christmas in the air, the fragrance of majesty, pure peace, and love. Presents are handed out, stockings are taken from their display and distributed. There are

presents for everyone in attendance, including our birthday King.

The best present we can present to Jesus this Christmas is us. He wants to walk with us throughout our everyday. He wants to watch us commune with others. He wants to see our everyday making a difference. Us showing kindness, love, and Christlikeness to those in our community and beyond. These are gifts that keep on giving – paying Jesus' love forward. We pay it forward to those we meet and leave a trail of Jesus' love wherever we go.



What a continued gift that would be! A priceless serving heart. To me, that is a representation of a modern-day Saint. Now, take this image into your everyday. Let it change how you relate to others. Let it make your everyday worth living. And live with a passion, the passion of Christ.



Saints go marching in

by Judith Davies

**Oh, when the saints go marching in
Oh, when the saints go marching in
I want to be in that number...
When the saints go marching in.**

There wouldn't be many people who don't recognize that song, especially the first verse. After the first verse there are many different versions and verses, all with the same theme, that of end time events with 'saints' walking through the 'pearly gates'...a euphemism for heaven. Other versions have verses such as;

**Oh, when the drums begin to roll
Oh, when the stars fall from the sky
Oh, when the moon turns red with blood
Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call
Oh, when the horsemen begin to ride... etc.**

This hymn was originally a Black American spiritual, originating from the Bahamas in the 1900s, and taken to New Orleans. The hymn was widely used for funerals where Jazz was acceptable. It came into its height of popularity around 1975, and again in the 2000s when it became popular again. Louis Armstrong, jazz singer and trumpeter, made the song famous when he sang it with his orchestra in 1938. Once again, he gave his own rendition of it and his first verse was this:

**We are travelling in the footsteps
Of those who've gone before
But we'll all be united
On a new and sunlit shore.**

All versions demonstrate the longing to be one of the 'saints' at the end of this world as they can be included in the chosen group that marches into eternity in heaven.

The first verse is often used in sports games such as the New Orleans Saints games in the NFL and Southampton and Tottenham Hotspur football clubs have adopted it as well. I wonder if they know the origins of the song and the real meaning of 'saints'? The meaning is not a member of a team or any fraternity. Saints in this spiritual means believers in Jesus who will inherit eternal life. Spirituals were often sung as a reminder that in this world there are many sorrows and troubles, but that this life is temporary and the one they were waiting for was eternal and without pain or sorrow in any form. It certainly is a rollicking good hymn which is easy to sing and lifts the spirits!



Through Joseph's Eyes

by Taylor Foster

This is a re-write of the Christmas story told through the eyes of Joseph.

My heart was racing. Sweat dripped furiously down my brow and stung my eyes. I'd tried every door, every home, every inn. Stuttering in desperation, I pleaded with the man who looked at me in pity.

'Please. Please help us. My wife.' I gestured toward Mary hunched upon the frail donkey. 'She needs a space, a bed. The baby...'

Every man said the same words sending a blade through my heart. 'I'm sorry, we're full. I can't help you.'

Mary's face was red as she writhed in discomfort. I was running out of time. The baby, whom I was to call Jesus, was going to save the world from its sins. God had entrusted him to me and I was failing before I'd even begun. With wet palms, I tugged hard on the donkey's lead.

The streets of Bethlehem were packed for the census and I realised I would never find a bed in time. Like a madman, I drove the donkey into a nearby stable. Sheep, cattle and goats bleated and bellowed at my intrusion. I flung my arms around and yelled for them to clear a

space. As I lay Mary upon the hay, I knew it was up to me and the livestock to see her and Jesus through the night.

Mary lay with heavy eyes and pale cheeks. Jesus, wrapped in my outer garments, was nestled in the manger. Bits of feed still clung to the dark, solid wood. As I stroked Jesus' cheek, the difference between my calloused worker's hand and his baby skin was extreme. A thought struck me. What can Jesus, saviour of the world, learn from me, a mere carpenter?

A knock jolted me out of reverie. Before I could get to my aching feet, three rugged men carrying shepherd's staffs entered our messy abode. They greeted us in awe. 'What an honour to meet you. We're here to see the baby, Jesus.' Their eyes shone in wonder. 'A host of angels told us of his birth.'

As they knelt and worshipped Jesus, all I could do was smile. When the Magi came bringing elaborate gifts, I watched from the sidelines. Mary's eyes were reflective and I knew she was treasuring these precious moments. The men doted on Jesus and talked about his importance to the world. Doubt knocked again. Who was I to raise this important child? What can I offer him? How am I meant to father a boy who comes from the Father himself?

Mary's gasp drew me back to the manger. Jesus' eyes flickered open. They bored into me, piercing through flesh and soul. Immanuel, the King himself, the saviour to be, lay in weakness in front of me. Innocent, unprotected, vulnerable. Something deep clicked within me. I had a role to play. I would raise him as his abba and protect him as his father. Yet, I knew I would listen as his student, wait upon him as his servant and praise him as his child.



Christmas Cheer

by Chris Robertson-Parkes

Christmas is nearing
Retailers cheering.
Credit cards flash
Who now needs cash?
Load them in style
Won't be billed for a while.

Trees and trifle
Turkey, pudding and cake
Mince pies, pavlova and ham.
Oh! What a feast we'll make.
Gifts wrapped – pressies galore.
Holly wreath above the door.

Chocs for Mum. Undies for Dad.
Book for Grandma
Hopefully one not read.
Papa likes whisky.
But will he get frisky?
Santa's hat askew on his head.

So what is the **real** reason
For this Christmas season?
A babe born long ago in a land far away –
The angels did sing.
Now bells do ring.
To greet Jesus, the new-born King.

So let's slow down this Christmas –
Relax in the sun.
Enjoy our gatherings – feel the fun.
Remembering all those who are dear.

Embrace the Season

Look towards a New Year!

Saints: Father Daniel ministers to a large flock

by Bob Shaw

The Church of Rome has long developed criteria for awarding Sainthood to those who merit this application – that I have never been able to understand – but I have my own opinion of what attributes may qualify.

First and foremost is a lifelong dedication to helping fellow human beings, while accepting a humble comfortless life for oneself. There was priest I used to visit who lived on the outskirts of a dusty trucker town on the road between the port of Assab on the Red Sea and the capital Addis Ababa. He had been born in France and worked previously in India, speaking the English language like a native of India.

He had been sent by his order to minister to the population of a settlement built upon the government owned and operated sugar cane plantation, irrigated from the Awash River. The communist government allowed him to minister to the people but provided no support, so he had to build his own house. Little help came from the diocese because he did not ask for it, so his house and small church were of a rudimentary construction of mud and wood under a thatched roof.

His near neighbour was a Canadian nurse who came later to set up a clinic in Metehara and provide a very basic health service for the town and the villagers of the sugar plantation. They worked as a team, giving assistance to those in need. The Canadian organisation provided Lucy, the nurse, with a house, a clinic and a car, but Father Daniel relied upon his venerable motorcycle to get around his extensive parish. He was very short sighted, almost blind, but the local people learned to jump out of his way as he slowly put-putted along the dusty streets. The workers on the sugar plantation were virtual slaves, paid very little and supplied with only enough food to enable them to labour. Father Daniel and Nurse Lucy were their only source of aid from the outside world.

I brought them supplies when I passed through on my way to Harar to meet Bishop George, who was active with his team in locating supplies of seed for me to purchase and transport to the north where drought

and famine reigned. Sometimes I called in on my way to an agricultural development project in the hills at a place named Midagdu. Lucy once showed me a trunk under her bed, filled with the long-curved knives worn by the wild tribesmen of the area. When they came to the clinic for treatment she confiscated their knives and only returned them when they had completed the course of medication.

With help from Lucy, Father Daniel, ministered to a flock of several thousand, providing both for their health and spiritual needs. I never saw him again after my three-year assignment ended, but I hope and trust that his order took care of him when age and infirmity brought his selfless ministry to an end.



Christmas: a poem

by Judith Davies

Christmas...

My heart sinks, but why?

Christmas seems fake and glitzy
and its origin gone by...

the wayside; with Santa now reigning high.

The child born in a manger with two
ordinary humans standing by...

Overwhelmed by events extraordinaire
such as angels in the sky...

Kings and camels and shepherds
dropping by –

under a huge star, shining in the sky.

Visits from angels showing them the way to be His parents...

The Holy Spirit hovering over Mary,
creating the Saviour, both God and man –
come to save mankind – who is made of clay.

Baby and a man and woman at the temple...

Prophet, and prophetess, who knew WHO they saw that day.

Heaven intercepting the earth, but

hatred there to meet Jesus right from His birth;

With Herod rampaging, out to kill Him who shows the Way.

Angels sounding the alarm -
The family escaping and...
Herod the Great causing a bloodbath
in Bethlehem.

Surely these events are of a *kind* -
more exciting than a bearded, fake old man...
who promises presents, that wind up in the can?
Unless... there is an enemy who wants us *blind*?

Remembrance Tree of Light

Sponsor a light in memory of a departed loved one

and support St John New Zealand (Ambulance Services)
and the 'Church Hall Facilities Upgrade Fund' of the Church

*Your sponsorship may be a memorial to a family member,
a special friend or colleague who has died.*



Christmas is for celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, a time for families and for remembering and for giving. It is at such times that the loss of loved ones is keenly felt. The name and symbolism of the 'Tree of Light' reminds us that there is light and hope even in the bleakest of times.

A beautiful, lighted tree will stand in St John's Church from Advent Sunday, 27th November through the Christmas period. Names of loved ones remembered will be displayed around the Tree.

Application forms are available in the foyer, from the Parish Office and on the website.

Services for Advent, Christmas and early January

Advent Sunday

27th November 5.00 pm Advent Carol Service

18th December 5.00 pm Service Christmas Carols and Readings

Christmas Eve

Saturday 24th 4.00 pm Carols from Candlelight
8.00 pm Christmas Eucharist

Christmas Day

Sunday 25th 8.30 am Christmas Eucharist (*said with hymns*)
10.00 am Christmas Eucharist (*hymns and music*)

January

Sunday 15th 10.00 am Holy Eucharist (*Vicar's final Sunday*)
There will be no 8.30 am service

On all other Sundays, the Holy Eucharist will be at 8.30 am and 10.00 am

Wednesdays 10.00 am Holy Eucharist

*Wednesday 21st December will be the last service before Christmas.
Services will re-commence on 18th January.*



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.

Contact Us

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