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St. John's Parish Messenger

Monthly News from the Mother Church of Launceston, Tasmania

No. 243

DECEMBER, 1971

Rector:

Rev. Hugh Girvan, S.B., St.J., Th.L., Dip. C.C.A.C.
Phone 31 5218

Assistant Staff:

The Reverend Graham Thurley, Th.L.
Phone 31 4896

Deaconess Jenny Shaw, Th.L.
Phone 31 5218

Organist:

Mr. Lindsay O'Neill,
F.R.C.O. (Ch.M.), A.R.C.M.
Phone 31 2998



FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends of St. John's,

I hope that all of you will be at one of the Christmas Day Services and with me worship the Lord of Life whose birthday we keep. On that day I will have my opportunity of sharing with you my thoughts on Christmas. In this "Messenger" I want to pass on to you some thoughts by Peter Marshall, onetime Chaplain of the United States Senate. I trust that you find fresh blessing as you "keep" Christmas.

Yours sincerely,
HUGH GIRVAN,
Rector.

Christmas Greetings to All Parishioners from the Clergy and Vestry of St. John's Church

"LET'S KEEP CHRISTMAS"

Let's not give way to cynicism and mutter that Christmas has been 'commercialised'. It never will be unless you let it be. Your Christmas is not commercialised unless YOU have commercialised it.

Let's not succumb to the sophistication that complains "Christmas belongs only to the children". That shows that you have never understood Christmas at all, for the older you get, the more it means if you know what it means. Christmas, though forever young, grows old along with us.

Have you been saying, "I just can't seem to feel the Christmas spirit this year?" That's too bad. As a confession of a lack of faith it is rather significant. You are saying that you feel no joy that Jesus came into the world . . . You are confessing that His presence in the world is not a reality to you . . . Maybe you need all the more to read the Christmas story over again, need to sit down with the Gospel of Luke and think about it.

Then you will remember that Christmas means—the beginning of Christianity—the Second Chance for the world—the hope for peace, and the only way. The promise that the angels sang is the most wonderful music the world has ever heard—"Peace on earth and good will to men."

It was not a pronouncement on the state of the world then, nor is it a reading of the international barometer of the present time. But it is a promise—God's promise of what one day will come to pass.

The years that are gone are graveyards in which all the persuasions of men have crumbled into dust. If history has any voice, it is to say all these ways of men lead nowhere. There remains one way—the Way—untried, untested, unexplored fully, the way of Him who was born a Babe in Bethlehem.

In a world that seems not only to be changing, but even to be dissolving there are some tens of millions of us who want Christmas to be the same . . . with the same old greeting, "Merry Christmas" and no other. We long for the abiding love among men of goodwill which the Season brings, believing in this ancient miracle of Christmas with its softening, sweetening influence to tug at our heart strings once again.

So we will not "spend" Christmas . . . nor "observe" Christmas. We will "keep" Christmas—keep it as it is . . . in all the loveliness of its ancient traditions.

May we keep it in our hearts that we may be kept in its hope:

—Peter Marshall



Happenings

A.Mus.A. means Associate in Music, Australia. It is gained through examinations conducted by the Australian Examinations Music Board through the University of Tasmania. One of those who was recently awarded the A.Mus.A. was Mrs. B. Proverbs, well heard member of our choir. Our congratulations.

* * *

Noticed the deaths of three of our old members. Miss Helen Suter who for many years conducted a maternity hospital in High St. Mrs. Dessie West who was a former stalwart of our Guild. Despite her physical handicap she was always cheerful and strong in her faith. Miss Frances Stebbings who gave much in her day to the Sunday School and G.F.S. Memorials in the church remind us of the long association of her family with St. John's. For the life and witness of each we give thanks to God.

* * *

Pity the cancelled TV service robbed others of taking part in the baptism of Nicholas Easter. For me it was baptism as it ought to be, parents, godparents and congregation contributing to the sincerity of the occasion.

* * *

Was moved by the child's self-made Christmas Card. It read, "To Jesus with many Happy Returns on His Birthday". A moral here for all of us.

* * *

The award scheme instead of prizes made sense to me when the Rector explained it at the Family Service. Congratulations to those who made it in the first year.

* * *

Was told that the majority of those at the Annual Meeting of the Northern Branch of C.M.S. came from St. John's. Good to know we haven't lost our Missionary zeal.

* * *

Having seen some of the late Mr. Brownrigg's slides on St. John's I'm looking forward to the next showing. Mr. Webb's commentary reminded me of some facts, and taught me others.

* * *

Hear on the bush telegraph that the Vestry has decided on heating the church for next winter. What about this summer?

* * *

Read about the Rector who preached the same sermon at the four Christmas services. In the middle of the third sermon two of the congregation quietly got up and walked out. At the door the sidesman asked if one was ill. "Oh no," said they, airily, "this is where we came in."

* * *

And this is where I go out for this year. Happy Christmas.

Elizabeth Street

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER - JANUARY

- 1 Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion. 7.15 p.m. Kindergarten Award Night.
- 5 **Advent II**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion, 10 a.m. Broadland Service, Sunday School, Creche. 7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer, G.F.S. Enrolment.
- 8 Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion. 7.30 p.m. Guild Dinner. 7.30 p.m. Vestry.
- 12 **Advent III**: 8 a.m. Holy Communion. 11 a.m. TV Baptism and Mattins. 7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- 14 Tuesday, 6 p.m. Men's Tea.
- 15 Wednesday, 9.30 a.m. Charles St. Service, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 19 **Advent IV**: 8 a.m. Holy Communion, 10 a.m. Holy Communion. 7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- 21 Tuesday, **St. Thomas**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 22 Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 24 Christmas Eve. 8 p.m. Carol Service.
- 25 **Christmas Day**: See special notice.
- 26 **St. Stephen: Christmas I**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion, 10 a.m. Morning Prayer. 7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- 27 **St. John**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 28 **Innocents' Day**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 29 Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- January—
- 1 Saturday—Circumcision of Christ—8 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 2 **Christmas II**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion. 10 a.m. Holy Communion. 7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- 5 Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 6 Thursday, **Epiphany**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 9 **Epiphany I**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion. 10 a.m. Morning Prayer. 7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- 12 Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 16 **Epiphany II**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion. 10 a.m. Holy Communion. 7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- 19 Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 23 **Epiphany III**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion. 10 a.m. Morning Prayer. 7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
- 25 Tuesday—**Conversion of St. Paul**, 8 a.m. a.m. Holy Communion.
- 26 Wednesday, 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 30 **Epiphany IV**, 8 a.m. Holy Communion. 10 a.m. Morning Prayer. 7.30 p.m. Holy Communion.

WOMEN'S GUILD

The last meeting of the Guild for this year was held at the home of Mrs. Watson. It was a very full evening. Decisions were made to send a donation of \$50 to the Roland Boys' Home to assist with their new building plan. The guild intends to make the Home their project for next year.

Beresford House is in need of painting and members were pleased to send \$25 for this work. Next year the redecoration of St. John's room at Beresford House will be at the top of our list of work.

As another Christmas is almost upon us, the President and members of the Guild take this opportunity to wish a very Happy Christmas to all. We pray that those who have known sickness and sorrow will be blessed with happiness and good health in the coming year.

PARISH MESSENGER

Donations to the Parish Messenger help us to defray the cost of printing, postage and distribution together with the "Church News". Donations may be given to the Clergy or Church Wardens.

Miss Tuffin \$2.00, Mrs. Smith \$2.00, Mr. F. B. Stevens \$2.00, Miss I. K. Murison \$2.00. Thank You.

MOTHERS' UNION

Many thanks to our members and friends who worked together to make our Mini-Market on 17th November such a success. Thank you, too, to our visitors. We are pleased to report that a cheque for \$101.00 has been forwarded to Clarendon Children's Home.

Our final meeting for the year was held the night before our Mini-Market. Business for the year was finalised and preparations made for the following day. On Tuesday, 30th November we had a "get-together" to conclude our year.

The first meeting for 1972 will be held on Tuesday, 15th February, commencing with a Service in the Chapel at 8 p.m. (Always held on third Tuesday of the month).

Any new members will be most welcome.

G.F.S. JUNIOR GROUP

Another important day for our younger G.F.S.'s is **Sunday, 5th December**, at the Evening Service when three more girls will be enrolled. We hope you will make a special effort to come to Evensong this night and give the girls your support. We are still a very small group but with their enthusiasm and your support and encouragement we cannot fail to grow both in numbers and in the knowledge of Jesus whom we promise to serve in daily prayer, regular worship, and by being friendly and clean and pure in what we think, do and say.

For those considering joining next year, our meetings are on Thursday evening, 7-8.30 p.m. each week. We will recommence when school resumes in 1972. Final night for this year will be Thursday, 16th December.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

CHRISTMAS EVE—

8.00 p.m. Festival of Carols.

CHRISTMAS DAY—

6.00 a.m. Holy Communion.

7.00 a.m. Holy Communion.

8.00 a.m. Carol Communion.

10.00 a.m. Holy Communion.

7.30 p.m. Evening Prayer and Carols.

Please notify the Rector of any desiring Communion in hospital or at home

SUNDAY SCHOOL AWARDS

These have caused great excitement among the children as from the beginning of October when the numbers of those already reaching the target began to increase. We congratulate Brian Stokes who passed it on 26th September and is off to a good start for his second award. For those who were not present at the family service, this system means that instead of an annual presentation at the end of the year children will receive an award as they reach the mark set. Quite a number of children will receive their awards at the first Family Service in 1972, so we hope that you will bear with us as this scheme is implemented. It simply means that from now on there will be a presentation of awards at each family service during the year.

A CHRISTMAS ACROSTIC

C-ome to the manger,

H-ere you'll find Jesus.

R-est in His promise:

I will give you life.

S-ing and adore Him,

T-el forth the good news: that

M-y Lord is

A-ble to

S-ave and to keep.

—Gwenda Steward

TELEVISED SERVICE

The cancelled TV service will now take place on 12th December at 11 a.m.

You can help by being present

NEW TELEVISION SERIES

The name of William Barclay has long been a household one among those who take their Bible Reading seriously. His many books and articles have won for him a deserved reputation—a reputation enhanced when he appeared in the television series "The Sermon on the Mount".

Now the A.B.C. is to present another notable series of six television programmes in which Professor Barclay deals with many of our contemporary issues: labour conditions, sexual relationships, the place of pleasure, the use of money, the relationship between the individual and the community. In each case he goes to the source of Christian ethical principles and shows the relevance of those principles to our own society.

"Jesus Today, the Christian Ethic in the Twentieth Century" will be shown on six successive Sunday evenings at 9.30 p.m. commencing on 2nd January, 1972.

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Plans are under way for a "SAFARI" down the East Coast to Hobart and return to Launceston via the Lake Highway in January. It is proposed that a group of about twenty leaders and members of the group will make the trip by cars. Stops will be made at St. Helens, Swansea and Hobart. Activities include swimming and walking, discussions and the like and a trip from Swansea to Coles Bay and Wineglass Bay on Freycinet Peninsula. All the members of the group will be involved in preparing the meals and the day to day chores. In order to keep costs down we will be using Church Halls as sleeping places. Further details can be obtained from Mr. Thurley.

WHY A CHRISTMAS TREE ?

The legend that tells us why this came to be goes back a very long way, to a poor cottage on the edge of the forest in Germany. It was a terrible night, a biting cold wind was howling through the trees outside. The peasant family were huddled together around the fire, glad to be indoors on such a night, when they heard a knocking on the door. One of the children, a boy called Hans, got up to answer the call, and there on the threshold, almost blown in with the gale, he found a ragged, tired, shivering child. He put a hand out and drew the little fellow inside, and led him to the fire, where the family all moved up closer to make room for him. The mother took the pot from the stove and poured him a mugful of the thin soup they were to have for supper, and soon he was warmer, and happy. Then, although he protested that Hans should not give up his bed to him, he was very pleased to stay the night at the cottage, with its warm friendliness.

In the morning the cottage was filled with a wonderful singing, as if the angels themselves had formed a choir, and the peasant family ran to see who it was. But, while there was no sign of anyone else, they saw that the head of their little visitor was dazzling with light, and they knew that he must be the Christ Child Himself.

When the Child left the cottage, not long afterwards, He thanked them with a sweet courtesy. Then breaking a bough from a nearby fig tree, He planted it firmly in the ground before them, and told the family that, for their kindness, the tree would always bring them happiness and plenty in the cold of winter.

And from then on that tree has been a joy at Christmas time—a thing that stands for peaceful, loving happiness.

—From The Ranger