



St John's Anglican Church, Launceston

Christmas Newsletter

Vol. 4, Issue 2

December 2003

In the Christian season of Advent when we look forward to remembering the coming of Christ to our planet, and his promised return, we have many events happening in which we encourage you to share.

By the time you receive this the Launceston Philharmonic Society will have presented on December 6th

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

with all the inspiration that unfolds in this masterpiece of Christian music—written by Handel in the short space of 3 weeks in 1742 and probably performed more often than any other major musical work across the world.

Our normal *Sunday service times* of 8 am, 10 am and 7 pm will apply on the 4 Sundays of December. On *Sunday 14th December* we have a visit of the National Director of the **Anglican Board of Mission (ABM)**, Canon Geoffrey Smith. He will preach at our 8 am service, and speak at a *pizza lunch* at 12.30 pm.

Wednesday services of Holy Communion will be at the usual time of 10.30 am, but on *Wednesday 17th December* the service will be followed by a **Christmas Lunch** in the Parish Centre hosted by the Mother's Union Fellowship and other friends.

Saturday, 20th December will see a new Christmas event—a **Children's Christmas Service** at 4 pm. There has been a wonderful development of our ministry amongst children through the Sunday KIDZ Church and Monday KIDS CLUB and Friday Buddies Playgroup. Children will be taking part in this service planned specially for families, just before Christmas.

Christmas Eve (Wednesday) at 8 pm will see the beauties and simplicities of the Christmas story presented in a **Service of Lessons and Carols** with our church choir leading the singing, assisted by other musical friends. It will be preceded at 7.30 pm by the "Community Music Brass Ensemble" directed by Steve King. Those staying on for the 11.30 pm Communion service are welcome to enjoy mince pies and other refreshments in the Parish Centre.

Christmas Day will be further marked by Holy Communion Services at 8 am and 10 am.

On *Sunday 28th December* in addition to services at 8 am & 10 am and 7 pm there will be a **Christmas Musical Festivity** at 2.15 for 2.30 pm. All attending will be able to join in Carols from 2.15 pm and at other times in this informal program. Special soloists include Pam Andrews, Nathan Donnelly and Belinda Ward (from Canada). Come for a pleasant Sunday afternoon followed by light refreshments at 3.30 pm. Art work by Noel Dicker will be on display to delight you.

Do invite or bring along family and friends to these special Christmas services in which we remember, in a world torn by war and bitterness, that the song of the angels was for peace on earth. As we sing our carols we will be joining with countless millions across the world celebrating the coming of the Prince of Peace.

MAY YOU ALL KNOW HIS BLESSING AT THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE AND GREETINGS FROM THE RECTOR

Greg Clifton

After 30 years of ordained ministry I wondered if there was any thing new I could write as a Christmas message this year. The world in which we live always seems to want something new, especially at Christmas time. There seems to be almost an obsession with things new. For many what is old appears to have no value. So many have abandoned the old story of God and his love for the human race and have embraced the 'New Age' philosophy. A philosophy that is devoid of a God who loves humanity so much that he 'enfleshes' himself in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and enters as a vulnerable baby that which he has created.

The old story comes to its climax thirty three years later when that same God abandons himself to the will of evil men and allows himself to be killed for the human race he loves so much.

The world may embrace the 'New Age' religion but I will stick to the old, old story of Jesus and his love. The old story of Christmas is LOVE wrapped in human flesh with human personality lying in a manger and then in its fullest expression dying for you and me.

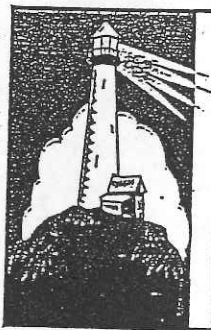
Diana and I wish you the greatest joy at this season of the Christ child

SPECIAL MINISTRIES at ST JOHN'S

PRAYER

A series of meetings on a Tuesday evening have led to a development of our Prayer Ministries. Amongst other possibilities there are plans for:-

1. A regular prayer cell meeting before services in the original church vestry off the narthex (behind the 'letter boxes'). It is planned to start this ministry at 9.45 (before the 10 am service) on Sunday, December 14th. Some of you might like to be part of this from time to time. Just come in—even if the meeting has started. If others would like to initiate prayer before other services, please feel free to do so.



2. At or after selected services—initially the 10 am service—there will be the opportunity of special prayer for those who would value personal supportive prayer for themselves, friends or relatives. If requested this can include the laying-on of hands for spiritual strengthening. If you would like more information about this ministry please talk to Roger (Team Vicar) or Jeni & Keith Irwin. This ministry will start in February linked with the 10 am service.

3. There are daily Morning Prayer sessions (30 minutes) every weekday, Monday to Friday, in the Chapel at 8 am. We would encourage more of you to make this a disciplined part of your life—perhaps before work or shopping—perhaps just one day a week. This is a key part of St John's prayerful support of all our activities, the world-wide ministry of the Church of Christ, and our folk with especial needs.
4. Our various study groups and the Wednesday Men's Breakfast make intercessory prayer a part of their time commitment. Don't hesitate to ask for prayer for yourself or others from any of these prayer cells. Prayer is the 'furnace' of the spiritual life of our church community.
5. To have your special request put on the Parish Prayer Chain please phone Rosemary or Basil Tkaczuk on 6331 1155.

Inter Church Activities

Launceston Conversation

"Working Together"

The parishes of Launceston and parts of the Tamar region were invited to meet with the Bishop at St David's on November 8th. A team of St John's clergy, wardens and others heard the Bishop reiterate the need for a 'Mission' focus and the need to explore innovative ways of spreading the Gospel. The outcome of discussions at that meeting revealed the need to focus on prayer and communication between the parishes. {A prayer co-ordinator/convenor is being sought.}

At a combined service at St Aidan's the following day, again attended well by St John's folk. In the discussion following a model

of co-operation was put forward which included a possible team ministry and linked administrative structures.

Developments of the model are being explored with Bob McKay, as Mission Support Officer for the region, offering consultative leadership.

Some parishes have already made some commitment to becoming involved in co-operative ventures of faith. The clergy, wardens and councillors of St John's parish are taking an active interest in the developments, but have made no commitments and will only do so after consulting with parishioners.

Your PRAYERS are asked for

the initiatives that are being taken {e.g. joint Alpha courses and various chaplaincies} and as we seek to discover God's will for the whole Anglican Church in the Tamar region.

Songs of Praise

This 2-monthly event which has brought together Christians of many different persuasions will continue on in 2004.

On February 22nd (2.0 for 2.15) it will be at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Newstead.

On April 18th at Scotch Oakburn College new music auditorium to celebrate Easter.

Pentecost 2004 (May 30th) will mark the second anniversary of the commencement of this series, and Songs of Praise will be back at St John's.

Music and More 2004 begins on February 1st with a wonderful Christian artistic display of significant paintings on Biblical themes by Fiona Gault, and music from some of our gifted musicians. This is part of our 'Meet St John's—Past and Present' weekend. See below! And the ways we are opening up St John's in new ways for our visitors and the very many people who just call in to see St Johns—or to pray.....Our next Harvest/Flower Festival will be celebrated on the weekend of March 13 and 14th with a Music and More concert on the Sunday afternoon

Meet St John's Past and Present

We have a constant procession of visitors from Inter-state and Overseas visiting St John's. Occasionally some of us have the chance to talk with them and point out particular items of interest in our impressive and beautiful church building. We have plans to have members of our community 'sitting-in' at St John's to greet our visitors, some of whom are glad to talk about particular needs. The idea is that we will have 3 daily 'shifts' - 10-12, 12-2 & 2-4 as far as possible with 2 people on each shift. To help give details of the history of our church a dream of many people over many years—especially Jenny Gill—is planned to come true during January. With some minor adaptations to the Narthex wall outside the already existing history room there will be a larger display area of memorabilia and pictures at the North end outside of the Narthex and into the North aisle.

There are many interesting items and pictures for display and these will be carefully labelled. Lighting for the area will be improved on advice from the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. Our welcomers will be able to offer a cuppa at tables that will be placed in the children's play area of the Narthex during the week.

We already have some volunteer welcomers for the 2-hour shifts, but we would be glad of many more. Please give in your name to Val in the Parish Office. Derek Nichols is co-ordinating the roster and he will be in the narthex after all services on 14th and 21st December to answer any questions—and take names. The roster will be flexible and prepared on a fortnightly basis..

See overleaf for details of an OPEN DAY.

Parish Office
157 St John's Street
Launceston Tasmania. 7250
Miss Valerie Murgatroyd
9.00am to 4.30pm
Phone: 6331 4896
Fax: 6334 1719
Email: stjohnd@bigpond.net.au

Team Rector
The Reverend Greg Clifton
Phone: 6331 5218

Team Vicar
The Reverend Roger Hesketh
Phone: 6331 7702
Children's & Youth Worker
Nathan Donnelly Phone: 6343 4703
Wardens
Robert Wallace, Audrey Sifleet,
John Smith.

Parish Councillors
Nola Barnett, Wendy Cowell, Marlene
Johnston (Treasurer) Valerie Murgatroyd
(Secretary), Craig Owens, David
Plumridge, Peter Renshaw, Robin Smith,
Jim Van Ommen, & Jan Whiddon,
Synod Representatives
David Plumridge, Val Murgatroyd
and John Smith.
Parish Magazine.
Editor—Derek Nichols.
Information for the next issue in March,
2004 needs to be received by 7th
February at the Parish Office.
Thank you.

OPEN DAY...

With the new History area being developed during January SATURDAY, 31st JANUARY is to be an Open Day designed for our parishioners to become acquainted with the new patterns. The Church will be OPEN from 10 am until 5 pm. There will be special art work on display, and the following afternoon (Sunday, February 1st) there will be a Celebration concert. So please book the date and come with friends. Light refreshments will be available.

A special feature will be the showing at 11, 1 & 3 pm an ABC video of a service at St John's in 1983—close-ups of our choir and parishioners 20 years younger!

Inspiration from Steve Power
"Many years ago I, like so many other people, went through a crisis and I discovered that I had become even closer to God through this period. The joy was almost overwhelming and because I had played guitar for so many years it seemed to me that it was time I gave my music to God and his people. So, I began writing and singing at various churches and St John's became my home church. Recently I was diagnosed with arthritis in my hands and was strongly advise to stop 'plucking guitar'. It was a shock that really hurt me. But as they say—'not to worry'. I am indeed in God's hands so I don't worry. I'm sure he has a lot more work for me to do. All I can say is that I am really grateful to God for having been given the opportunity to serve through music.

Praise to you, Lord."

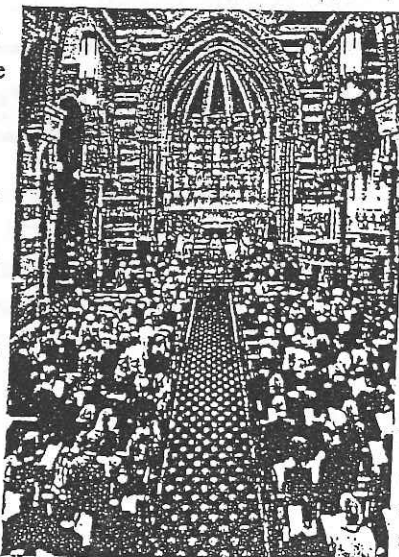
St John's Social Committee

Throughout 2003 the congregation has been invited to join in a number of social occasions. We are blessed with a strong team of very willing workers, not all of whom belong to the committee.

Four times a year, following the Wednesday service of Holy Communion a luncheon is held in the Parish Centre. Invitations are issued to nursing homes in Launceston to join with us in fellowship. On average 75 people attend. The Mothers' Union Fellowship is involved in organising transport, setting tables, supplying delicious slices and working behind the scenes to make things run smoothly. The Christmas luncheon will be on Wednesday 17th December.

We also have a Pizza/Sandwich & Sweets lunch following every 5th Sunday service and parish meeting. This is a valuable time of fellowship for all our congregations.

If you feel you are able to help occasionally with catering (i.e. setting up, serving, washing up etc.) your help would be much appreciated. Please let Val in the Parish Office know.



NEWS FROM THE TAMAR
Holy Trinity Parish will welcome its new Parish Priest in January. The Rev. Doug Edmonds, who previously worked in Tasmania and is known to many of you, will be inducted by the Vicar General on Tuesday, 6th January. He will have arrived from Victoria the day before.

Mission to Youth.

In February a new style of youth work designed to attract young people from across Launceston will be based at Launceston Church Grammar School—under the leadership of Scott Sargent and Steve Wakeford.

QUAMBY COTTAGE, ORFORD

Preparations are on-going in readiness for summer occupancy. It is good that parishioners have taken advantage of this excellent facility on the sunny East Coast, with wonderful views over to Maria Island. The school holiday period is now fully booked BUT why not consider it for your Autumn or even winter holiday destination.

A restorative retreat from the hecetics of life.