



Summer 2021

Issue



St Mark's Matters

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*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:
The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son,
And will call him Emmanuel.
— Isaiah 7:14*

*The star of Bethlehem shone
when Christ was born
In the darkest nights,
Christ's love still shines the brightest*



Have a Blessed and Joyous
Christmas

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Mount Barker

GIFTS AND GIVING

Christmas is the season of gifts and giving! God is the ultimate giver of gifts that cover every aspect of your life. One of the best-known scriptures is John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Gifts are an expression of gratitude, of favour and love. Be it a gift of forgiveness, a smile, an act of compassion, a bunch of flowers, a meal or a surprise of some kind. In addition there are many other ways and expressions of giving; Jesus said, “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to any one of these little ones who are my disciples, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.” Matthew 10:42

How thoughtful of God to pursue us with the love of Jesus! John 3:17 continues, “For God did not send his Son to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” No condemnation-how good is that! Is there someone to whom you could offer the gift of forgiveness? What better time than at Christmas.

I recently had cause to reflect on the gift of people we meet as well as the people we have met over 50 years of David being a pastor; these people are gifts money cannot buy. In each parish, God provided mother, father and grandparent figures and friends, gifts so appreciated by our whole family when we were living far away from our God-given biological family and friends

You may not agree with the thought that even pain is a gift! Pain comes to tell you that all is not well with a part of your body. Although not exclusively the elderly, those of us in the older age group tend to suffer painful body parts. Pain that drives you to seek healing and help from people qualified to administer the gift of healing. I know that some of you have pain for which there is no known relief. When the pain becomes so unbearable, when the body can no longer cope, God’s merciful gift of death is the ultimate healing for human suffering.

You give an offering as a part of the worship to prosper the spread of the Gospel. This is a response to God’s love in giving Jesus to be born, to die and rise again, for you, his dearly loved child. In 2 Corinthians 8:7 St Paul urges, “...see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” Whatever you give to God of your time, talent or treasure, God has already given you. This Christmas you can use the Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS) Gifts of Grace to help those who struggle without the most basic things we take for granted. Caring for others is an invaluable gift. It’s easier to give than to receive. I recently took up an offer of help from a fellow member and another member told me how much it meant to that person that I took up her offer. Let’s learn to receive gracefully!

“Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.” John 1:16
Joy Christian.



The First Christmas

**24th December 2021
Christmas Eve**

**6.30pm Carols &
7.00pm Christmas Eve Service
at inbarendi, Cornerstone College**

**9.00pm Lessons & Carols
at St Mark's**

**25th December 2021
Christmas Day**

**8.30 am Traditional with Holy Communion
10.00am Contemporary with Holy Communion**

**St Mark's Lutheran Church, Mt Barker
Christmas Services**

Have a chuckle!

The minister told his congregation that he would be preaching on lying and cheating next Sunday. He asked the congregation to read Mark 17 during the week in preparation. The next Sunday he asked all those that read Mark chapter 17 to put up their hand. Half the congregation did! The minister said, “that proves my point!” (There is no Mark chapter 17)

One night six nuns were on the third floor sleeping quarters in the convent when a fire broke out. The nuns quickly took off their habits and tied them to make a rope and climbed out the window.

After they were safely on the ground a newspaper reporter asked the nuns. Weren’t you afraid that the habits might have ripped since they were so old?

The senior nun said “No dear, we weren’t worried at all. Don’t you know old habits are hard to break?”

The CEO was scheduled to speak at an important convention, so he asked the executive assistant to write him a punchy 20-minute speech. When the CEO returned from the big event he yelled at the assistant “Half the audience walked out before I had finished”

The assistant was baffled for a minute. Then the explanation dawned on him.” I wrote you a 20-minute speech, but I also gave you the two extra copies you asked for!”



FIVE CHRISTMAS'S

1970 was my first Christmas away from my home and family in Uraidla.

In October of that year, I set off on my big overseas adventure, heading to the UK.

My 1970 Christmas wasn't that different from home. I was staying with a family in Southampton. We had a tree, presents and the traditional meal. But outside it was snowing. It was my first white Christmas. The family wasn't a Christian family, so we didn't attend Church.

1971 saw me living alone in London. I had a flat, which I decorated on a budget, I missed my family dreadfully that year. However I did have a friend who invited me for a Christmas meal on Christmas day. I don't remember much about the meal, but I do remember their house. It was a skinny, brand new 3 story home. I was amazed how skinny everything seemed. Once again we didn't attend church.

By 1972, I was married and expecting our first child. We were still living in Wales, UK. But what made this Christmas memorable was not only was I sharing Christmas for the first time with Jim, but with his mother, Winnie and her husband. We were working at the holiday camp Butlins, where we had first met. Every year at Christmas, Butlins, Barry Island held an Ballroom Dance Christmas week. Jim's Mum and her husband were keen dancers and keen to come and share the week with us. It was lovely to spend this time with her, even though Jim and I were working and had duties to perform. This was the only time we have shared a Christmas with Jim's mother. Once again we didn't attend church.

In 1973 we were back in Australia, we were parents to our son Darren, and about to buy a house in Mt Barker, our first home. But until our home became available we stayed with my Mum and sister at Uraidla. I was so excited to be home again, surrounded by family. We lived on a cherry orchard, which had its benefits! It was so good to celebrate Christmas with everyone again, and, with the blessing of a son. Although some of my family attended Church, Jim and I didn't, we hadn't come to that time in our lives yet.

1974, followed a similar pattern to the year before. We were having our first Christmas in Mt Barker, we took part in all that Mt Barker had to offer, which wasn't a lot in those days. It was fun seeing Christmas for the first time through the eyes of a child, present opening was exciting and then sharing lunch with the family at Uraidla was lovely. The weather that day was cold, windy and wet. Not at all like the Christmas weather we expect. Little did we know of the devastation Cyclone Tracy had wrecked on Darwin 18 hours before. Slowly news filtered through. This was before news is spread so quickly through technology like today. On Boxing Day came the news of the evacuation of Darwin. My brother who worked for the Health Department then was needed at the airport to help organise the evacuee's. He remembers children with their names written on their arms for identification, the stress written on the faces of the evacuee's, and the complete sense of loss. We were all moved by his stories.

Attending Church at Christmas has now become a special part of our Christmas celebrations. We feel Christ has always been there guiding us, loving us, he was just waiting for us to become part his family, which found with St Marks.

Jim and Sue O'Higgins



2021 Sunday School Wrap-up

It was a joy to help organise St Mark's Sunday School this year. We had a band of willing leaders and many interested children. Each session we selected one Bible reading to focus on and enjoyed a range of discussions, games and crafts. Recent highlights include:

- Making 'welcome books' for babies preparing to be baptised
- A watercolour introduction to the book of Hebrews
- Exploring the healing of Bartimaeus through drama and braille
- Insightful (and unexpectedly humorous!) discussion of Jesus' raising of Lazarus
- Looking at a soldier's prayer book and making shields of faith
- Icing honey biscuits in celebration of Christ the King
- Interviewing John the Baptist (AKA Pastor Ben)

The aim of Sunday School is to build children's connections in the church, increase Biblical knowledge and nurture faith. What a privilege!

A sincere thank you to all the children and leaders who participated in Sunday School this year.

Meghan Pfeiffer.



The Christmas Carol Top Ten



- 1.Silent night
 - 2.God rest ye merry gentlemen
 - 3.O come all ye faithful
 - 4.O holy night
 - 5.What child is this?
 - 6.We three kings
 - 7.The first Noel
 - 8.Away in a manger
- (Original words by Martin Luther
in a poem to his children)
- 9.O little town of Bethlehem
 - 10.Joy to the world

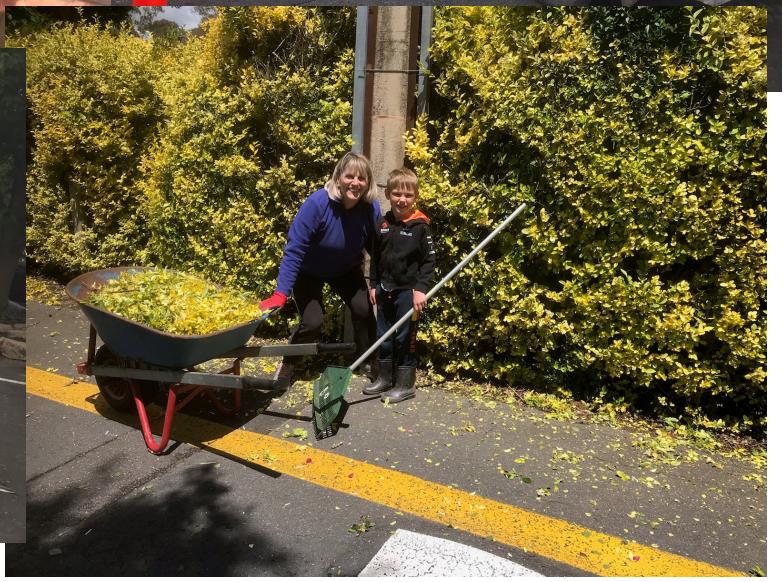
Twas the night before Christmas. God glanced over the earth.
He looker to and fro all over its girth.
'They missed it again' He said with a sigh,
A heavy heart and a tear in His eye.
I gave them My Son, so they could be free.
My greatest gift, to them from Me.
They traded Me in, for a man in red,
A little tree, and a horse drawn sled
How do I save them, and make them see
My love is complete, My grace is free.
How do I help them, when all they know
Is a talking snowman, and a box with a bow.
Maybe next year, they will stop and see
The biggest gift of Christmas is the little Child from Me.

Very American, but makes one think. I think it was written by one Molly Pack. Fay Harms

Working



The recent working bee at the church was well attended by some 35 members. Work completed included the garden walling, tree trimming, window cleaning and general cleaning. The Todd family provided the muscle for the walling. Shane Pfeiffer demonstrated his skills on the excavator. David Kuchel took home a load of cuttings etc. Overall a great turnout with the church grounds looking a lot better.



The LCA page



PASTOR MITCH KITSON

Earlier this year we welcomed Mitch Kitson and his wife Olivia to St Marks for Mitch's vicarage with Pastor Ben. At the conclusion of his vicarage, Mitch returned to ALC to complete his Pastoral Ministry studies. Mitch was ordained as a pastor of the LCANZ on December 12 at St Petri, Nuriootpa, among his home congregation. Mitch and Olivia will take up ministry at St Martins, Mount Gambier in 2022. We pray God's blessings as they begin their ministry journey



Spot the church..

Where are these churches? First correct answer in writing to the editor will win a coffee and cake with the Editor!



Church Picnic



The church picnic was held at Keith Stephenson park. A good number of members attended . After lunch, members and children where asked to complete a quiz. Some interesting questions provided some interesting answers. The children held a tug of war. The cricket match was enjoyed by the children and some energetic adults. Overall it was a great day of fellowship and fun.

CHURCH REGISTER

Baptisms

Date	Name	Born	Parents
17/10/21	Archer Kuchel	27/06/21	Shaun & Tiffany Kuchel
31/10/21	Everlee Kuchel	03/08/21	Lauren Kuchel
05/12/21	Emma Phelan	25/06/21	Tom & Melissa Phelan

Membership In

Date	Name	From
03/10/21	Fay Lee	reinstated
17/10/21	Shaun & Tiffany Kuchel	Our Saviour, Aberfoyle Park

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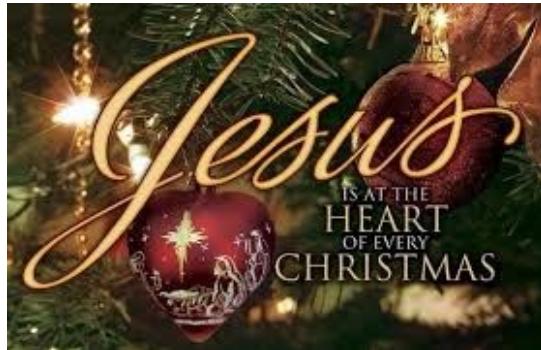
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Baptism Everlee Kuchel



Advent poster

Out & About At St Marks



It has been a privilege to publish
St Mark's Matters.

The Editor
Thanks You!



The gift tree



Returning member Fay Lee



Pastor and foundation students on the cover of the Herald



Emma Phelan Baptism