



Summer 2023

Issue



Bumper Edition

St Mark's Matters

All at the
Matters wish
you a truly
Blessed
Christmas and
the best of
everything in
2024.

Published
Quarterly in
Interests of
Members &
Friends of
St Mark's
Lutheran
Church
Mt Barker





What Does Christmas Mean to You?

There's a sense of excitement amongst the students and staff here at St Mark's. It's that time of the year and the word for the season is 'Christmas'. What's special about Christmas for our students?

Our Student Representative Council provided the following responses...

Christmas means being with your family and spending time with them – Sydney

Celebrating Jesus' birth – Micah

Catching up with people in my family – Saphira

Kindness and being with family – Lawson

Giving gifts to show you care – Ezra

Remembering the story of Jesus' birth – Indiana

Making memories and sharing – Mia

Backyard cricket and time together – Isaac

Visits to both sides of my family – Connor

Eating gingerbread houses and special foods – Aria

At St Mark's we know Christmas is also a time when we especially give thanks for the year that has been and a time to give back to the community beyond St Mark's. This term St Mark's donated chapel offerings to the Uniting Church's Hungry No More program. The Student Representative Council also organized a non-perishable food drive with the collection of items donated to the program.

May the wonder of the first Christmas, the joy of God's abundant blessings, and the peace of Jesus' presence be with you and your family this Christmas season.

Merry Christmas

Loredana Saracini

THE NIGHT OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

On the night of the first Christmas
All of heaven was in awe
Of what the Father, Son and Spirit
Had for the world in store
A revelation of such enormity
That opened the gates between Heaven and Earth
And caused all the heavenly angels
To praise God for all He is worth
For the Father had given
His only begotten Son
To be born into this fallen world
To redeem and save everyone
Mary and her husband Joseph
Had travelled to David's town
But a place to have a baby
Was nowhere to be found
So they had to seek refuge
In a stable, dark and dank
Among the oxen and the cattle
And the smell? Well let's be frank!
As they laid that little baby
In a manger, warm and dry
And looked down on Him adoringly
I wonder if they asked "Why?"
Why, of all the people
That were upon the Earth
Were we the chosen, special ones
To be blessed with a gift of such worth!?
For they were both poor and lowly
With none of the riches that tempt Man
They were living a hard but happy life
When God told them His great plan
The angel Gabriel
Came to Mary during the night
With a word for her alone
Which initially filled her with fright

But as she quietly listened
To the message Gabriel told
Her heart was filled with awe and wonder
And she became humbly bold
"If it be the Lord's will
Then I will let it be
For who am I to question
What the Lord has willed in me?"
Joseph on the other hand
Filled with many a doubt
Had planned to quietly divorce Mary
No words of anger would he shout
But the angel spoke a word
To this righteous man
"Don't do what you plan to do
For you are part of a greater plan"
So Joseph took his betrothed
Mary And proudly made her his wife
And they endured the innuendo
As they began their married life
As Mary and Joseph pondered this
And stored these things in their hearts
The shepherds were keeping their flocks safe
Upon the hills out in the dark
When suddenly a host of angels
Appeared in the night sky
Glorifying and magnifying The LORD most high
They told the shepherds
"Go quickly, And follow that star so bright
And you will find a tiny baby
Who will rule in power and might"
"This baby is the King of kings
And the Lord of Lords Worship and glorify Him
For He is worthy to be adored"

The Night of the First Christmas continued

"He is the Father's chosen One

Who will redeem all of Mankind

So they can know true peace and grace

He will be the Way to God they can find"

So the shepherds left their flocks

And hurried to find what the angels said

And as they gathered around that manger

Both their spirits and souls were fed

us a few years on

Wise men from the East came calling

Bearing gifts of gold, myrrh, and frankincense

And at the feet of this child fallen

This is how it all happened From that first Christmas night

And we are all heirs of that baby

Who by the Spirit have been called into the light

To know the work of that child

Who grew up and became a Man

Who completely fulfilled the will

Of His Father's eternal plan

He lived His life for others

And shared the Father's peace and grace

And when the time had fully come

Died a death in our place

He died a death that destroyed sin

And its power of guilt and shame

So we can all freely live

In the power of His holy name

For He is the Lord Jesus

The Father's only begotten Son

And only by His death on a cross

Was the victory won

The victory over Satan

And all his evil ones

So we are now known

As daughters and sons

Of our Father who is in heaven

Reigning with His beloved Son

And He will come again in glory

To claim the victory He has won

He will gather His chosen people

They will stand at His right side

But those who deny and hate Him

Will find nowhere to hide

He will say to all those people

Depart from my presence into Hell

For you chose to reject my calling

And instead lived under Satan's spell

My grace, mercy, and peace

I offered you every day

But you rejected it over and over again

Stubbornly going your own way

There is nothing more I can do for you

That has not already been done

When I and my Father and the Spirit

Together as three in One

Came down to this Earth We created

To redeem all that we had made In a plan

that was set into place

Before this Earth's foundation was laid

So as we gather together this Christmas

With friends and family

Let us reflect upon that first Christmas night

And what it truly means for you and me

Mark Frost



We praise God and rejoice with Gudrun Karschimbus who has been honoured by Southern Cross Care for her volunteer work with residents at Oakfield Lodge. When one part of the body is honoured all of us rejoice. Congratulations Gudrun and our appreciation to other volunteers and visitors who care for St Marks residents and others in Oakfield Lodge.'

Hope

Creative Word Fellowship didn't disappoint this year with a rich line-up of speakers from the USA, Canada and Finland. Dr John Stephenson and Bp Juhana Pohjola were in Australia at the end of November, while Dr Bryan Wolfmuehler spoke at Pilgrim, Magill, at the end of September. In spite of his German surname, Bryan Wolfmuehler was brought up Baptist, but became a Lutheran during his university years.

To attempt to summarize in this magazine all that was said at the Magill conference would be impossible. But readers can listen for themselves by going to **youtube.com** and typing in **speaking lord conference 2023**. From his own website, Pr Wolfmuehler also provides subscribers with free insights into a verse or two from Scripture each Wednesday. His studies always include quotes from the writings of Luther.

To listen to the incisive presentations by Dr John Stephenson and Bp Juhana Pohjola, once again go to **youtube.com**, but this time type in **confessing Christ**. Make sure that the video you click on has connected with it the names of Pohjola and/or Stephenson.

Finally, Creative Word Fellowship is planning another young adults Bible study retreat, 18-21 January, at Halls Gap, Vic. For details go to the CWF website, **cwfellowship.net**, click on 'events', then 'young adults retreat'. The theme of the January retreat is 'Standing Firm: Faith and hope anchored in Christ Jesus'.

Pastor David Buck

MIDWEEK CHURCH SERVICE

On the first Wednesday every month our Church holds a service with Holy Communion at 11:am.

Gathered together is a group of regular worshippers and sometimes the not so regular. Everyone is welcome. It is a quiet service, held later in the morning which suits those who find the Wednesday time slot more comfortable. During our time of Vacancy Pastor Kym Mills has kindly lead us with lessons on Psalms. Initially he asked us to nominate a Psalm of particular interest to us, a Psalm of significance. One psalm nominated was someone's wedding verse.

After service we gather for a shared luncheon. One recent luncheon we mostly shared quiches. Nobody complained, they were all different, there is always plenty to eat. Sometimes we are treated to food are. We all appreciate these treats and wonder what surprise awaits us next. Gathering together monthly has created a sense of family amongst the worshippers. A sense of caring for each other, a feeling of belonging. So, on the first Wednesday of every month if you feel you would like to join us please COME.

From the Chairperson

At the 2023 LCA General Convention of Synod, the church made the decision to explore the way in which the LCANZ could function as 'one church with two different practices of ordination.' The LCA General Church Board developed 'The Way Forward' project to determine a framework for this to take place. Three frameworks were released for the church to provide comment and feedback. You can find out more about this project at <https://www.lca.org.au/wayforward/>.

Additionally, there is an e-news and everyone is encouraged to sign-up for this to receive the latest information. You can sign up here: <https://www.lca.org.au/departments/ministry-support/communications/enews/>.

The LCA encourages congregations and parishes to discuss this issue thoroughly and openly, so that the delegates understand the position and feeling of the congregation or parish as a whole prior to attending convention in 2024.

Emma Graetz, was elected as our St Mark's delegate for Synod in 2024.

Our alternate delegate is Kerryyn Simpfendorfer.

As Chairperson, I encourage you all to use the links above so that you can be fully informed about "The Way Forward".

Ian Pfeiffer



Alice Springs reporting

Thank you for the invitation to share some of what has been happening for us north of the border. We arrived safely in Alice Springs in mid-April after three days on the road. Everyone handled the trip well, thanks to regular stops, snacks and a little help from modern technology. We have since settled in well at the church manse, five minutes west of Heavitree gap, in the suburb of Gillen. My installation took place on May 14th by Bishop David Altus and was a special occasion.

The first six months here have been focused on settling in. The boys are attending Living Waters Lutheran School in Year 4 and 1, and Katherine goes to Ida Stanley Pre-School. She will be off to school in the New Year. The boys have gotten into soccer, cricket and squash, while Katherine has joined the local ballet school and enjoyed her first performance recently. All three of them have been doing swimming lessons at the local pool. Meghan has been busy with the kids, joined a local running group, volunteered at the school and helps out in the local community garden.

Ministry in the local congregation has been enjoyable and busy. I have had eight funerals and twenty-six baptisms so far. This is not unusual in central Australia, due to the large Indigenous Lutheran population. Funerals are often of young people. My first and most recent were both people younger than me. Baptisms often happen in groups, when families from bush communities are in town together. Our regular worshippers would be about three-quarters Indigenous.

I get good support from the Finke River Mission staff (who work next door), Indigenous pastors, pastoral assistants and two part time church office staff. I am currently running a Confirmation class on Wednesdays and am involved at Living Waters School with chapel services, staff devotions, board meetings, Christian studies classes, and the occasional school camp.

Two highlights so far have been attending a 'Bush course' at Titjikala, a couple hours south of Alice Springs. These are training courses for the Indigenous pastors and evangelists. The second was our whole family attending Kupriya Day just out of Hermannsburg. This is a special festival to celebrate when water was first piped to the Mission. The festival includes a service on site at Kupriya springs with lots of baptisms and young Indigenous men riding on horseback from Hermannsburg.

We have had lots of visitors since coming to town, including family members, Footners, Menzes, Heynes and Kupkes, to name a few. This has been a nice way to stay in touch with happenings at St Marks. I also take an occasional peek at the bulletin online. We were glad to hear that Greg Page accepted the call to serve at St Mark's as your new pastor.

Finally, please pray for us in Alice Springs. It is a place of huge opportunity for the church, but also many challenges and declining resources. The Alice Springs congregation is struggling financially, as is the Finke River Mission. Many Indigenous people here have a long and positive association with the Lutheran Church, which is something to be proud of, but not always the means to support the work financially. If this is something you feel interested, able or called to do, then please contact me and I can provide more details (phone 0402825173 or email pfeiffer241@gmail.com).

Blessings to you all at St Mark's. We think of you often and remember you in our prayers. We have such fond memories of our time with you in Mt Barker, which continues to encourage us in the present. God's richest blessings.

Pastor Ben and family.



Alice Pics from Ps Ben



MEMORIES IN THE LIFE OF GLEN BRIAN MATTHIAS

The Matthias family were members at St. Marks for many years. These are excerpts taken from Glen's story (thanks Lorraine)

Glen Brian Matthias was born in 1934, the first-born child of Walter Frederick and Ellenore Cornelia (nee Kuhlmann), of West Croydon. Glen was baptised at St Stephen's Lutheran Church Adelaide on 10th Feb 1935. Glen's father Wally was a farmer's son from Waterloo, who had six brothers and four sisters.

Glen's preschool years were spent at West Croydon, the family home opposite the Port Adelaide Railway line.

From a very early age, Glen's mum taught him to pray each night before going to sleep. Beginning Sunday School at age 3, he studiously learnt his weekly memory texts.

In 1942, the family moved to Cowandilla. Glen attended Cowandilla Primary School. During his school years, Glen became fascinated with birds and flight, observing feather movement in their landing and taking off. Coincidentally, the family home was directly under the flight path, with planes descending very low over the house roofline in their approach to landing at Adelaide Airport. And Glen loved it! As an 11-year-old, Glen wrote to leading aircraft companies in America and England, to Boeing, Douglas and Fairey Aviation, asking for details and information on their specific aircraft.

School also gave him an opportunity to express himself with geometric drawings, designs, and cartoon sketching, and in grades 6 & 7 he began his love of woodwork, studying trees and timber and making models and small pieces of furniture for home.

Glen was also musically minded and began learning the Piano Accordion, studying, and performing with the Adelaide College of Music. He continued his secondary education at Thebarton Boys Technical High School, excelling in all his subjects.

At 17, Glen entered a 5yr apprenticeship as a Fitter and Turner, the company having its own Foundry enabling it to make precision tools from the outset to the finished product and was also a keen and competitive tennis and football player. At the end of 1950, Glen turned sixteen and was required to register for National Service Training having to nominate on the form a preferred service. He wrote first preference Air Force, second preference Air Force, third preference Air Force. At the completion of his Apprenticeship, he was asked to stay with the company and further his technical studies.

In 1954, aged nineteen, Glen was called up to the Air Force, being sent to Rathmines in NSW just south of Newcastle. He was working in the Technical Squadron and at his graduation and passing out parade, he was one of fifteen men who marched on to the parade ground, followed by a truck carrying a disassembled 'Tiger Moth Biplane Aircraft' – and the task – to reassemble the plane. To successfully complete the exercise, the aircraft had to start manually and taxi off the Parade Ground. The completed assembly took 9 minutes – a new record.

In 1955, the youth of St Stephen's Lutheran Church, Adelaide, held a beach picnic and Glen was introduced to a young nurse from the country. Glen had seen her at a previous Youth meeting and said to a friend - "I am going to marry that girl.

In 1957, Glen and Norma married in the Pine Creek Lutheran Church, Appila and began their family life at Torrensville. Glen was a toolmaker for many years but eventually he decided to study, taking evening classes in creative selling and practical salesmanship, prior to selling World Book Encyclopaedia. He then moved to work with Johns Hydraulic Equipment, as the Sales + Service Engineer in the Plastics, Rubber and Di-casting business.

In 1967, the family moved to a larger home as the family had grown over the preceding years with the birth of Lorraine, David, Gloria, Stephen, and Deidre. Our mum, Norma, continued her nursing career around having children. In 1973, Mum returned from her workplace and again lamented the lack of quality nursing care for the aged, wishing she could make more of a difference. She and Dad decided to buy the small nursing home Mum was working in. Dad resigned from his job, taking on the General Maintenance, Administration and Payroll side of the nursing home.

Dad was a bit of an innovator as well, and was often seen scribbling on his graph paper, designing and creating items of necessity or modifying existing articles. Family holidays were lots of fun – 7 people crammed in the car, all five kids fighting to sit by the window.

In 1977, the Matthias family moved to Mt Barker on a 10-acre property. The whole family loved it there as it was considered 'the country' in those days. Continued

Dad enjoyed serving in any capacity at St Mark's Lutheran Church - serving on the Christian Education Committee as Chair and various roles. He drew up plans for enlarging areas of the Manse and Church kitchen and helped with other jobs wherever he could assist.

After the sale of the nursing home, Dad worked at Trinity Place Retirement Village, Pasadena. For 17 years he attended to maintenance work and in 1999 he retired from paid work.

Dad enjoyed travelling with Mum and they were fortunate to travel overseas for business conferences related to the nursing home, and for pleasure. In 2007, Dad and Mum moved into independent Retirement Village living at Woodside. They were actively involved in the Village Community and St John's Lutheran Church Woodside,

He was well known around Mt Barker as 'the best dressed shopper,' always seen in a business shirt and tie, and of course, his Akubra hat. His tie collection acquired over the years was quite astounding.

A man of principles and a stickler for what is right and correct, Dad's favourite saying was "if you are going to do a job, make sure you do it right the first time."

Dad's collection of Andre Rieu DVDs grew over the years, and he and Mum would often sit in peaceful silence listening to and watching the engaging performer.

In March 2021, Dad was devastated at the death of the love of his life, Norma, after being in love, married and in partnership with her for over 64 years. At this time, it was not possible for Dad to remain living independently and he took up residency at St Paul's Lutheran Nursing Home in Hahndorf.

In recent months, although declining health affected his ability to be independent, his spirit was never inhibited, his bad 'Dad jokes' continued, and all the time, Dad kept his steadfast and unwavering faith in his loving God. Glen left this earthly life peacefully on Sunday 19th November 2023.

Glen is survived by children + partners: Lorraine and Jeff, David and Sue, Gloria and Chris, Stephen and Judy, and Deidre and Andrew; + friend of Dahlene; 11 grandchildren, 8 great grandchildren and Glen's brother Barry.



Men's Group at Paech's Farm



The men's group met at the Paech's farm again. We welcomed several new comers. David Kuchel told a couple of his poor jokes (again). His devotion was "Silence amongst turmoil". As usual Bev served us a magnificent lunch. Andrew Cecil gave us an insight into his hobby, Model aircraft flying. He explained the types of motors and how they worked. He brought along the 2 planes he flies. Unfortunately he could only do startups. With a number of power lines in the area, flying them was too dangerous. Once again we thank the Paech's for their hospitality. Next outing 20th January.

HERE, THERE OR IN THE AIR

How do you say goodbye to someone you love who you know you most likely will not see again this side of glory?

What a blessing it was to see our beautiful friend, Dave Anderson again. Along with others of you, we go back a long way with Dave. He first came to these antipodes at the beginning of 1974. David and I had been in Auckland, New Zealand for two years, our first parish after David's graduation/ordination. Going to another country/culture in itself was a formative, growing experience. There were 21 different nationalities represented in St John, Auckland, mainly post-war European migrant people. Imagine blending their cultures and ideas into a single congregation! Well, that had been done previously. Then Dave came and showed us songs, scripture and stories in a way we had never experienced before! It was transformational to say the least. Added to that was the impact of some of our Lutheran youth and others who brought Scripture in Song, passages from the Bible set to music by David and Dale Garret. We loved singing these songs and it helped to memorise scripture as well. We had never heard anyone play the piano the way Dave did, either.

Dave Anderson is the ultimate story teller and he has such a good memory as those of you know who came to share time with him and his entourage at St Marks recently. When Dave first came while we were in New Zealand, David drove him around New Zealand to some of the other Lutheran congregations. What a privilege and mutual blessing that was!

I felt very emotional seeing Dave for what is most likely his last visit to our shores. Dave's wife, Barb, is not well enough to accompany him and that's been the case for some years now. We hold such fond memories of them singing together, their voices and hearts blending in their love for Jesus. Dave has remained friends with many people in Australia and New Zealand and in many other countries as well. Taking the Good News of God's Kingdom to so many places makes me think that Dave brings heaven to earth! We could say that about many people but there's something about Dave that is unique. Does God laugh? Dave makes God laugh, I'm sure he does. Dave brings to life the joy of the Lord's presence, something we need to cultivate if we're going to share that same good news with people. As someone once said, if we want to help save others for Jesus, we need to look saved!

I beg your indulgence to share again this writing from Henri Nouwen...

Joy and sadness are as close to each other as the splendid autumn leaves are to the soberness of the barren trees. When you touch the hand of a returning friend, you already know that person will have to leave you again. Joy and sadness are born at the same time, both arising from such deep places in your heart that you can't find words to capture your complex emotions.

But this intimate experience in which every bit of life is touched by a bit of death can point us beyond the limits of our existence. It can do so by making us look forward in expectation to the day when our hearts will be filled with perfect joy, a joy no one shall take away from us. The mystery of death and life is the essence of the Easter and Christmas celebrations that proclaim the victory of life over death. We have not been promised a life free from sorrow, but one in which joy shall have the last word.

As we said our last goodbyes to Dave, he spoke the words of the title of this writing; "We'll meet again here or there or in the air." In the air is a reference to 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Thank you Lord for these comforting words.

Joy Christian.

Seniors lunch



What an outstanding event again, with the theme old time Music. The tables were set in black and white to carry out the theme with printed music placemats and musical notes in the floral arrangements. Thank you to Marg Miller for organising the catering of cold meats and sweets which was very well received meaning that our evening meal would have consisted of soup and a sandwich. Thank you to the helpers which meant that the seniors could sit and enjoy this treat.

Thank you to Jane Hill for being the very capable MC. The devotion was called Travelling Light based on Max Lucado's book of that title followed by Psalm 23. Jane looked to the burdens of self-reliance, worry and Grief. Jane had a backpack with large Jenga blocks with the type of burden on it. Each block was dropped after talking about it, making the bag empty and light. Her visual demonstration of not carrying our burdens but handing them over to Jesus really got the message across to all of us.

St Marks students presented a wonderful array of musical items. The choir (loved the You are Special) and piano/.violin/flute/clarinet/guitar solo pieces enabled us to see the very comprehensive music studies and program available. Very well done!! And of course, our favourite keyboard player.. Trevor Wegener who played an extra special part during the game "name that tune" which had some of us remembering the tune but not the title. Great mental exercise. I see that we seniors are well catered for in trying to utilise our memory banks.

Bev Paech was presented with a signed apron as a thank you for her 30plus years of organising the catering fundraising efforts.. truly a wonderful example of utilising her God given talents to enhance St. Marks. No amount of words can adequately thank her enough. We have certainly appreciated her creativity and presentation over the years.

Thank you to the Women's Fellowship fellowship for holding this luncheon once again. It is truly appreciated and gives many people a lovely Time Out event. Margrit Friebe.

SA-NT LUTHERAN WOMEN'S RETREAT, OCTOBER 21-22, 2023

HELD AT ST MARK'S , MOUNT BARKER

The Saturday began with enthusiastic singing accompanied by Trevor Wegener on the organ and President Lois Kupke then welcomed those present.

During the day more singing sessions were enjoyed where participants could select the songs, accompanied by Maxine Zimmermann.

Wendy Glover led Opening Devotion sharing her personal faith journey which fittingly set the scene for the day.

Our Bible Study sessions were led by Retreat Chaplain Karen Pietsch with the theme "Beside still waters". In the first session Karen talked about ways to help us pray and spend time in God's company. She suggested dwelling on a passage of Scripture, listening to a piece of music, going for a prayer walk with Jesus, discovering parables around us. Scripture passages to dwell on were Psalm 23:1-3a, Isaiah 55, and Mark 6:31-32. We then had time on our own to spend with God.

The second session emphasised being still and listening to God, based on Matthew 11:28-30 and Psalm 23. Again we went our own way in quiet solitude to spend time with God. Some suggested options were to use a finger labyrinth, meditate on a painting of Psalm 23, journal, or draw, doodle or write with coloured pencils, or find a quiet place outside in the school grounds. We could also focus on the words 'recover, restore and comfort' as found in the above readings.

First thing on Sunday morning the third session was more interactive around tables in the hall. In the middle of each table was an empty cup or other vessel. A writing by Martin Luther titled "Empty Vessel", John 7:37-39, Psalm 23 and Psalm 36:5-9 were the bases for our discussions about how we are filled with blessings from God and how these overflow to others around us. We blessed another person by writing an affirmation on a piece of paper.

We were also blessed by three guest speakers. Emma Graetz, Director of Vocational Education and Training, shared about her work at Australian Lutheran College which doesn't just train Pastors. There are over 60 students accessing studies at ALC including interstate and overseas students on-line. Emma coordinates the *Discover* programme which includes exploring, prayer, and field work. Emma also helps at SPIN camps and Christian Life Weeks and runs Christian-based Leadership Skills workshops with Year 6s at schools.

Andy Traeger, Chaplain at Cornerstone College, gave us insights about the make-up of the students with regard to Christianity. He quoted statistics giving percentages of students who are either actively Christian, nominally Christian, no belief, atheist. He went on to give examples of how staff best relate to the students. Camps are a good time to establish positive relationships.

Pastor David Christian showed photos and relayed experiences of his mission trips to Vietnam, where Christians are a minority group. Asia Focus was the recipient of half of our offerings. It was heart-warming to see the enthusiasm and love for Jesus of the people there.

To get our bodies moving, Marg and Lyn led a few fun exercises. A Committee was elected to plan the next retreat, with two new members to replace the two retiring members.

The Saturday Evening programme was lots of fun and fellowship. A game of Celebrity Heads had the participants guessing which character from the Bible they were. One skit showed us what not to do when visiting in hospital, and another skit showed us how not to pray. Singing in rounds sounded great. Forming groups according to month of birth helped us mix with others.

Continued....

Sunday School

In our last few Sunday School lessons for the year, the children focused on Advent and what it meant to them. We talked about the different ways that we can get ready for Christmas and most importantly, how we can prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus. We looked at the advent wreath and discovered that the very first wreath was made by a Lutheran minister in Germany in the 1800's. He made it using the wheel of a cart and had twenty red candles and four white candles. We made our own advent wreaths using five candles representing hope, peace, joy and love.

Thankyou to all families involved in Sunday School in 2023.



From the Editor

Thankyou to all those contributors who submit articles. Unfortunately I cannot include all I get at some times. I try to prioritise and publish articles that are local and written by members. It cost around \$2.50 per copy to publish each quarter (for 16 Pages). If I go over that number of pages the cost goes up. With at least 120 copies published each issue you can see that this is certainly a cost. I would ask that articles be kept short (one page maximum) and to the point. I would ask they be sent to me as jpg or pdf format. Much appreciated Mike.

The retreat continued

Sunday morning Worship with the local congregation was another high point of the weekend. Pastor Neville Kriewaldt led the service incorporating our theme, and gifted musicians led the singing. Two of our ladies read Bible readings. We were then treated to a community lunch with the congregation before we made our way home.

The local Mt Barker congregation gave great help towards the success of the 2023 retreat. They provided suitable facilities, attractive floral arrangements, 3 hosts to accommodate participants, audio-visual operators, a musician, and the most delicious food. Having the school campus adjacent was also an advantage, although none of us could do anything about the rather cool weather, making the use of those grounds less practical.

Seventy ladies participated in this Retreat. Lots of positive feedback indicates they were blessed by their special time with God and other Christian women.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Expectations...we all have them. Expectations come in all shapes and sizes; some are good, others not so good! There are all kinds of expectations at Christmas time, depending on your age. If you're a household with children, expectations are usually running very high! Maybe there's a childlike expectation in all of us that we tend to suppress because it may not seem proper in a grown up person?

We hear the Christmas story each year and it may easily go in one ear and out of the other. Let's stop and have a look at some of the unexpected events that impacted the people that first Christmas. Luke (and other gospel writers) recorded the unexpected events leading up to and beyond the Christmas story as we know and love it. Luke 1: 26 *'In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David...'* How unexpected was that!! In verse 29 it says Mary was perplexed. Can you put yourself in her place? Just going about her daily life and suddenly there's the unexpected visit from the angel Gabriel! All is explained by Gabriel, *'Don't be afraid'*, Mary is told, *'for you have found favour with God'* What a classic of the unexpected, however Mary may have perceived it! In verse 38, Mary says, *'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be according to your word.'* And it was! Joseph, husband of Mary, a righteous man was about to call off his relationship with Mary, not wanting to expose her to public disgrace. But, just when he had resolved to do this the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. It's okay, Joseph, *'Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'* Another unexpected expectation!

There are so many facets of the unexpected in the Christmas story. I don't know if census' were common in those days? It sure played into God's plan for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem, the town of David. Just imagine those shepherds out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks. In the middle of the night they are confronted with an army of heaven's angels. I don't think they were expecting such good news but they sure acted on it!

The wise men, Gentiles, who actually came much later, had been studying the stars for many years may not have been quite as surprised but they began a journey, led by a star to the place where so many expectations were being fulfilled.

Fast forward some thirty years to Jesus' ministry and we see the unexpected being fulfilled in the miracles of Jesus, much to the ire of the religious leaders' expectations. People we might write off Jesus saw possibilities for. Jesus embraced people with so much love who may not have been expecting much but were rewarded with healing, wholeness and peace beyond human understanding! What counted was their faith, even if it was as small as a mustard seed. For some it was the faith of their friends who brought them to Jesus, who could see beyond the unexpected. Jesus could see the potential of every person. Jesus sees the potential in you. You might find it hard to believe Jesus could do the unexpected through you? Go for great expectations!

Let's take a look at the Christmas story through new eyes. Could you expect the unexpected this Christmas? What could that look like for you? What gift, physical or spiritual, might you be expecting when you come to worship each Sunday? What unexpected blessing are you hoping for? Let's expect the unexpected as we hear again with fresh understanding and expectation the true meaning of Christmas. But the angel said [to the shepherds] *'Do not be afraid; for see-I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people!'* Luke 2:10. You can expect the unexpected and rejoice that Jesus is born for you.

(Joy Christian)



Wise words By Brian Bart

I first believed in prayer at 14 years old when setting rabbit traps. I saw a brown rabbit. I prayed. I wanted that rabbit to keep. I wanted to catch it by the tip of its toe! Next morning it was caught by the toe and was not hurt. I kept it for years!

#####

September 1969. I was driving down Talbingo Mountain from Thredbo. I sang out to the children; I have no Brakes. on the left-hand side of the road was a 400 metre drop and no guard rail. The coach went over to the side where the mountain was, and I did not steer it there! The coach just grazed the mountain. The engine was roaring at the bottom of the mountain. 3 federal policemen came and said I should have got a gold medal. If the coach went over on its side, it could have been disaster.

They gave us accommodation and meals. They checked over the coach which was only a few months old. That coach was my pride and joy. Since then, everything I have had is only on loan from God.

My Dad Johannes Norman Bartholomeus

Dad was born in 1908. He started school at St Martins Lutheran School at 7 years old. Then all German schools were closed due to the war. Dad then moved to a new school and said school was a happy place.

In his early days dad trapped rabbits and sold their skins and sold shell Parrots. He cracked stones for the council roads. He became interested in painting after Mr Wotzke painted mums' room in oil for \$12. Dad started working for Mr Wotzke where he earned \$1.25 per week (48 hours) There were no holidays, sick leave, no work, no pay.

Dad left the painting game for a while and worked at Sedan for a building contractor. All sorts of work including digging a well at Mcbeans station. (Baldon station where I did a clearing sale when it was sold ..ED) Dad said it wasn't his sort of work, so he then worked as a builder and painter for a while.

Mr. Wotzke wanted him back, so he went back. One day he went to work, and Mr. Wotzke said there was no more work. This was the beginning of the depression (around 1929). Dad did odd jobs before Mr. Wotzke asked to take over the business.

Dad at age 21 did painting for 10 cents per hour and was still not getting any work. He painted cars for \$20 in duco, \$16 in enamel, that included painting underneath, mudguards, diffs and springs. If he earnt \$10 to \$12 a week it was good pay. Dad painted by hand originally and then by a spray gun which I still have.

Dad bought his first bike at 17 years old for \$144. He also had 2 second hand Harleys. He bought his first car in 1933, a Morris Cowley Roadster for \$180. Dad remembered the mouse plague of 1920, the big river floods, and the droughts. He married Frieda Rosenzweig in 1934 and purchased a home on 2 hectares for \$920. It was worth \$2000 before the depression.

Dad had heart trouble from 1940 so he sold the business and purchased a farm at Monarto south.

He was a Sunday school teacher, lay reader and for a time secretary of the ELCA. Member of the rifle club also. At age 90 he moved to St Pauls Hahndorf. He passed away at the age of 103 years, 8 months.

Thoughts on unexpected.

A likely definition for me of the word 'unexpected' is a surprise.

In our lives we confront the unexpected quite often. It could be someone returning to church that has been away for awhile, it could be a family returning to mainly music after a long absence, it could be finding an anonymous generous gift in your church pigeon hole at church, it could be going somewhere, like we did recently in our Care group, called Elephant's Rest out in the sticks of Callington and being totally surprised by what was there.

But then again, the unexpected could be in the form of something not so joyful.

At Christmas each year we are faced with a time when we don't know what to expect. If we find ourselves alone for whatever reason....family busy, there's been a death....

I recently listened to a Podcast that suggested ways of overcoming sad emotions when the disappointment of the unexpected happens especially at Christmas.

When we're having to do something about when we're confronted with change. Who likes change? Not me!!

How do we cope with those unexpected times? Do we become stressed, panic, feel confused, angry?

Some suggestions from the podcast I noted were

1. Acknowledge that life is dynamic, not static. Change is part of life.
2. A positive attitude is an asset in unexpected situations.
When making a plan, always have an alternative plan in case the first plan fails. I've found this helpful on occasions when I've found myself alone on Christmas day. Plan B was a visit to Hungry No More to help out with their Christmas meal they offer. That shook the blues away for me.
3. Or how about inviting others who are alone to your home for a meal?
4. Focus on the present moment, learning from it the most you can, and taking advantage of new opportunities that come your way.
5. Have a certain degree of detachment from your problems. This can help you stay calm and in control of yourself.
6. And most important of all, draw strength from your relationship with God. Stay close to Him, enjoy His presence and peace. Above all PRAY.

Acceptance that God knows the best for us in this season of change.

We read the accounts in the Gospels of the arrival of the expected Messiah{ the Old Testament tells us many times that a Messiah will come} but He came in such an unexpected form and that form was as baby Jesus.

What a surprise!

May we expect joy this Christmas as we celebrate the unexpected baby who came to unexpectedly save us so that we can enjoy an unexpected and undeserved gift of salvation and hope into eternity. May the JOY overshadow the upsets and sadness if we linger on the unexpected events that sometimes happen in our lives.

Be surprised what God does in the unexpected!

Jane Hill

CHURCH REGISTER

Pastoral Acts from October – December 2023

Baptisms

Date	Name	Born	Parents
15/10/23	Edward Lord	16/05/23	Charles & Rhiannon Lord

Confirmation

Date	Name
19/11/23	Damien Reeves (adult)

Membership In

Date	Name	From
15/10/23	Rhiannon Lord, Amelia & Oliver	Brisbane
19/11/23	Damien & Kylie Reeves, Charlotte	Victor Harbor
10/12/23	David & Marianne Brooke	St Michael's Hahndorf

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Apology to Pastor Page

I was in the church office the other day. Jane and Vicki were also there. A gentleman came to the window. I asked him "Morning. Are you here to do a job? Are you tradie? " Suddenly Sharon came around the corner and introduced Pastor Page. I was so embarrassed. Editor

St Marks†
Lutheran Church
SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS

35 Hampden Rd Mt Barker

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The old fella



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Smile kids!



*It has been a privilege to publish
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Thanks You!*

Our new pastor Greg Page

Bible study at Auchendarroch?

